INDIA AND IRAN IN THE *LONGUE DURÉE*

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Persian Studies

India and Iran in the *Longue Durée*
Edited by Alka Patel and Touraj Daryaee

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Edited by
Alka Patel and Touraj Daryaee

UCI Jordan Center for
Persian Studies

— 2017 —

In memoriam

Sri Pramod Chandra Chaudhury, 1930-2016
Hushang A‘lam, 1928-2007

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NOTE ON TRANSLITERATION

Historical names, terms, and titles of works have been transliterated. To avoid undue complexity, modern names of persons and places remain untransliterated.

INTRODUCTION:
INDIA AND IRAN IN THE *LONGUE DURÉE*

Alka Patel & Touraj Daryaee

> In the *natural* process of the development of *national* histories there is the recurring danger that one's grasp of past [*sic*] could become so insular that many large movements, which could not be restricted to modern territorial boundaries, might escape proper attention.[1]

The above observation served as part of the justification for a work ostensibly similar to this one, titled *The Growth of Civilizations in India and Iran* (2002).[2] The work itself was not unique in its ultimate goal, as a number of important articles, chapters, and edited volumes – mainly beginning in the 1990s – have contributed to the endeavor of elucidating the multiple cultural-historical connectivities between the Indic and Iranian worlds. The quoted passage signals an ongoing process rather than a goal to be achieved fully. Indeed, the directions of recent scholarship formed the underpinnings for the conference in which this volume's contributions originated.[3] But the above passage's emphasized words, *natural* and *national*, invite some scrutiny and in turn provide a further *raison d'être* for this volume.

In the extremely varied landscape of post-colonial thought, there is nonetheless consensus regarding nationalism and knowledge: there is nothing *natural* about *national* boundaries or *national* histories. Political boundaries are fabricated (and often remain in flux) and histories are continually being *re*fabricated. The latter is certainly the case throughout the nation-states comprising the focus of this volume – namely India, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Iran – where shifts in political climate have led to the imposition of cultural policies and reinterpretations both of the past and of recent twentieth-century historical processes.[4] Thus the present volume necessarily engages both the scholarly discourses *on* and the political realities *of* these regions – two arenas that are virtually always intertwined, whether acknowledged as such or not.

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[1] Moosvi 2002, vi. Emphasis added.

[2] It is noteworthy that in the same year, a volume emerged treating the connections between Iran and other regions, though principally concentrating on the post-Revolutionary period. See Keddie 2002.

[3] Bearing the same name as the present volume, the conference was convened at the University of California-Irvine (20-22 April 2012):
www.humanities.uci.edu/arthistory/india-iran-conf/.
Only a selection of papers presented there is included in this volume.

In line with current scholarly thinking, the authors in this volume do not fixedly define “India” or “Iran” in timeless ethnic terms or consider them geographically stable entities.[5] Rather, each term is used as a rubric of convenience to refer to a cultural sphere with an ingrained understanding of its permeable frontiers, and to ascribe approximate geographical origins to cultural practices. What is unequivocally accepted is the long-standing connectivity between these cultural regions, superseding the rise and fall of empires, shifts of populations, and alterations in routes of communication. The volume approaches this connectivity as an indelible *structure* in the Braudelian sense, and embarks on the examination of a longer period than most other publications, as discussed below. The *longue durée* framework adopted here not only encompasses more than two millennia of India-Iran connectivity, it necessarily relies on multiple disciplines to elucidate various points in this chronology, especially given the differences in types of surviving evidence.[6] This multidisciplinary purview allows for the analysis of early periods whence mostly material remains survive, and their juxtaposition with later *corpora* of evidence – which tend to be more textual[7] – as indices of the mobility of populations and circulation of ideas.

Iranian Studies

The connectivity between the Indic and Iranian worlds likely commenced with the earliest periods of human activity, in the Indo-Iranian geographical regions recorded beginning in the third millennium BCE (Parpola 2002; Kuz′mina 2007). The Indic and Iranian peoples were the last groups among the Indo-Europeans to part from one another after a long coexistence.[8] The great Indo-Europeanist Georges Dumézil (1898-1986) observed that this coexistence resulted in a common tri-functional social and ideological structure manifest, for example, in Vedic and Avestan literature. These shared cultural traits distinguished the Indic and Iranian peoples from the many other Indo-European speaking groups, rendering them the most similar to each other and leading to their mutual involvement in each other's cultural worlds (cf. Dumézil 1930). The work of Indo-Iranists, both of the previous (Schmitt 2012) and the new generation (Sadovski 2012), has shown the deep connections in the linguistic and structural views of these populations.

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[4] For a re-writing of the early twentieth-century Indian movements agitating for independence from British colonial rule, including more prominent (and historically inaccurate) roles for “Hindu” leaders and the sidelining of actors such as Jawaharlal Nehru himself, see Hari Om *et al., Contemporary India*, the textbook of the Indian Government’s National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) [cited in Habib 2002, xxxi & note 80]. In a recent conversation with a representative of the Indian Ministry of Culture, the present author learned of the Modi government’s intended favoring of archaeological excavations at ancient Buddhist and Hindu sites, together with a benign neglect of the Islamic sites in India (S. Mittal, personal communication, January 2015). See also Chapter 8 in this volume.

[5] See *inter alia* Pollock 2003; Flood 2009, 1-14; Patel and Leonard 2012; de Bruijn and Busch 2014.

[6] For a discussion of *structure* and the *longue durée,* along with the need for interdisciplinary dialogue, see Braudel 1980, 25-55.

[7] Cf. Patel 2007 for the preponderance of material *versus* textual evidence specifically for the Indian Ocean rim – including coastal India-Iran linkages – during the eleventh through fifteenth centuries, i.e. on the eve of European commercial and eventually colonial expansionism. It was in the early modern period, during the ascendancy of the Safavids and the Mughals, that *textual* sources came to the fore and continued to demonstrate the intense interaction and movements of people throughout the Indo-Iranian world. See also e.g. Subrahmanyam 1992 and below in main text.

But despite the long accepted historical connections between the Indic and Iranian spheres, (Chattopadhyaya 1974; Vogelsang 1986; Callieri 2012) Iranian studies scholarship has evinced two arguably counterintuitive tendencies: one being a reluctance to expand into India and explore more fully the two regions' mutual significances; the second being a proclivity to assume these mutual significances were prevalent mainly *before* the fourth century BCE. Alexander of Macedon's defeat of the Achaemenids (c. 550-330 BCE) in 334-330 BCE, the assumption holds, supposedly severed Iran's transregional connections with India, to be reestablished nearly two millennia later with the rise of the Safavid (1501-1732) and Mughal (1526-1544, 1555-1858) empires.[9] Although, a newly emerging scholarly emphasis on the first millennium CE (Alram et al. 2010) – exemplified by Bopearachchi, Parker and Daryaee in this volume – is gradually displacing this trend, demonstrating the continued interconnectedness of the Indic and Iranian worlds also *via* the Greco-Bactrians, the Indo-Parthians, and the Kushanas and the Kushano-Sasanians, i.e. spanning the third century BCE through the third century CE (Vondrovec 2014; Falk 2015; Rezakhani 2016).

One current enabler of the *status quo* in Iranian studies is the preponderantly westward gaze of most Iranists, regardless of whether their time frame of investigation is antiquity or the modern period. Thus, while both confrontation and interaction between Achaemenids and Greeks or Sasanians and Romans have received ample scholarly attention, Parthian-Maurya (third-first centuries BCE) or Sasanian-Gupta (fourth-sixth centuries CE) connections have not garnered comparable analyses.[10] At the root of this issue were the geopolitically driven boundaries between the Indic and Iranian worlds: the several and distinct British, French, and Russian imperial-Orientalist projects of the nineteenth century parceled the knowledge of Asia into artificially bounded geographical areas.[11] Hence, political powers rather than historical-cultural realities divided rivalrous Franco-British interests in what is now known as the Middle East/Near East/Islamic world – most significantly including Iran – from Britain's virtually sacrosanct dominion of India. These divisions, along with Czarist Russia's practically proprietary interests in Central Asia – a geo-cultural neologism in itself[12] – have all conspired in the obfuscation of historical linkages between the Indic and Iranian worlds, and indeed in determining the extents of these worlds themselves.

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[8] See Mallory 2002 for a review all of the viable theories on the Indo-Iranian migrations.

[9] For Safavid-Mughal relationships see Hodgson 1974.

[10] One extremely important exception to the prevailing, westward-looking trend is provided by the monumental *Encylcopaedia Iranica* (ed. Ehsan Yarshater): One of *Iranica*'s most detailed sections is on India, wherein thirty-three lengthy articles or sub-sections trace India-Iran connections over several centuries. Indeed, *Iranica*'s India section counts among the longest of any section dedicated to a subject area outside of Iran. Regarding India-Iran ties during the Sasanian period see also Kroger 1981; Wheeler 1947-48; and Callieri 2004.

Fortunately, recent conferences and publications (e.g. Shayegan 2007), including the present volume, have begun to serve as correctives to both these tendencies. In terms of scholarly methodology, it is important to consult – for example – the vast corpus of Sanskrit literature for information on the Iranian peoples, while even the comparatively meager Old Persian texts mention Indic groups. The Old Persian term *hindu-*, for example, appears in the inscriptions of Darius I (r. c. 522-486 BCE) as a reference to the Indus River (Skt. *sindhu-*), concretizing the easternmost territories of the Achaemenid empire and the latter's firm association with the Indic cultural sphere. According to P. Thieme (1970: 450), in the Achaemenid epigraphic corpus the river was perceived to demarcate the frontier between the Indic and Iranian cultural worlds. This frontier was a permeable one, however, and traditions combined to form fascinating cultural and material syncretisms documentable especially in the areas contiguous to the Indus, which in modern times fall within the nation-states of Pakistan and Afghanistan. Overall, this volume joins a small but growing number of works aiming to instill a scholarly awareness that by studying the Indic world, one can better understand the Iranian world, and vice versa.

Indo-Persian Studies

Several works by the late C.E. Bosworth (1928-2015), eminent historian of the eastern Islamic world, as well as more recent scholarship have continually shown the importance of the regions today encompassed by Afghanistan, Pakistan, and northern India – though eventually almost the entire Indian subcontinent – for understanding the Iranian world from late antiquity through the early modern period.[13] Here, seemingly far from the center of Iranian culture, Persian nevertheless became an important literary and official language. It must be emphasized, however, that any focus on medieval India-Iran connections is rightly distinguished as Indo-Persian studies or a specialization in its own right: such a term not only treats the *historical* connection between India and Iran as integral, the term also encapsulates the *historiographical* reality of this field as one that is simultaneously part of and yet also distinct from Iranian studies (e.g. Islam 1970).

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[11] See Greaves 1959 and 1986; and Bonakdarian 2004.

[12] See Mahajan 1980; and Morgan 1981.

[13] While Bosworth's list of publications is extensive, the most relevant among his works to India-Iran connectivity are listed among the Works Cited. See also Patel 2007/2011 and *idem* 2014.

The *longue durée* approach of this volume further underscores the need to be aware of a pointedly Indo-Persian field of study: while "Iranian" fruitfully encompasses the ancient through late antique periods (c. 400 BCE onward), "Indo-Persian" better suits the eleventh through nineteenth centuries, and perhaps beyond.[14] The compound term disambiguates the era initiated by Firdausī's (d. 1020) *Shāh-nāma* and the emergence of the Persian language as a principal purveyor of the Persianate *ecumene*. It bears reiteration that the great epic itself was composed in its most widely accepted recension at Tus and brought onto a transregional stage at Ghazna, in its own turn at the threshold of those very porous frontiers of the Indic and Iranian cultural worlds. Indeed during the eleventh through nineteenth centuries, India was much more than a passive consumer of imported Persian literary (and other) productions; the region itself was a prolific *maker* of them. The "Indo-Persian" rubric, then, is inclusive of a span of at least nine centuries, well into the modern era, when Persian literary achievements transgressed putative geographic polarities between the Indic and Iranian worlds.[15]

But is it *natural* that this abundant production of Persian poetry and prose in India for close to a millennium would shape the scholarly landscape in significant ways? Certainly upon surveying the western-language edited volumes analyzing the mobility of people and ideas between India and Iran, a notable tendency does come to the fore: With the exception of the 2002 *Growth of Civilizations* volume discussed above – which spans several millennia from prehistory onward – the majority of these works focuses on the sixteenth through nineteenth centuries, or the early modern through modern periods. Of course, this temporal bias overlaps with the beginning of a growing European presence abroad, for our purposes specifically the French and English entrées into Safavid Iran and Mughal India, respectively.[16] What is more, the largest proportion of contributions to the aforementioned works analyzes texts (including poetry and print culture), with only a few addressing other cultural productions.[17]

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[14] This was the central question addressed at a conference titled *After the Persianate*, convened by Afshin Marashi (University of Oklahoma, 7-9 March 2014).

[15] Cf. also Hermann and Speziale 2010, 10ff. For Persian literary activity in northern India during the eleventh through sixteenth centuries see esp. Alam *et al.* 2000, 23-4; Alam 2003 and *idem* 2004, 7ff. Due to the high esteem in which the Persian *ecumene* was held among the Mughal elite, Indian practitioners of Persian poetry in particular maintained it "pure" and free of the admixture of indigenous literary practices (see Lefèvre 2014: 92, 100). A study of the absorption of Persian language and literary traditions *into* the Indic vernacular Sindhi is discussed in Asani 2003. For a more quantitative assessment of the presence of Persian in India during the early modern through modern periods (sixteenth-nineteenth centuries), see Cole 2002.

[16] While the scholarship on English presence in India is vast and well trodden, Delvoye (1995, 1-4) provides a brief but informative outline of French scholarly beginnings: In many ways similar to the British, French interest in Iran and eventually in India came as by-product of commercial and military presence in these areas; the eventual rise of studies on the Indo-Iranian world in France were initiated particularly during the eighteenth century, thanks in large part to the collection of manuscripts in India – and their transportation back to France – by individuals such as Jean-Baptiste Gentil (1726-99, in India 1742-77) and Antoine-Louis Polier (1741-95). For both these soldier-adventurers' activities in India see Dadlani 2010 and Sharma 2012.

It is worth noting that, in current historiography, such a concentration serves partially to reify – rather than interrogate – the influential yet problematic periodization of the totality of Persian literature first put forth by the renowned Iranian scholar Muhammad Taqi Bahar (1884-1951, named *Malik al-Shuʿarā'* by the Qajar ruler Muzaffar al-Din Shah in 1903). Bahar's periodization has been criticized not only for sidelining sixteenth- through nineteenth-century Persian literary production in India as "over-ripe" and "baroque" – considered characteristic features of the *sabk-i hindī*, or the Indian style – it also renders "the history of Indian Persian in the pre-Mughal period either insignificant or incomprehensible" (Alam 2003: 187). The current scholarly predilection for studying the connectivity between India and Iran from the sixteenth century onward has also resulted in the tautological conclusion that "[w]hile mobility was always an important characteristic of South Asian society, it dramatically increased during the early modern period" (De Bruijn and Busch 2014: 7).[18]

It is impossible, however, to establish definitively that the movement of people and ideas during one historical period was quantitatively greater or lesser than another, particularly given the decreasing probability in the survival of evidence from the more distant past. Ultimately, the present volume's adoption of a *longue durée* view of the multiple moments and registers of interaction between the Indic and Iranian cultural spheres strives toward two complementary aims: to (re)emphasize the transregionalism of persons and their tangible and intangible belongings in *all* pre-modern periods; and thereby to confront the reality that "India" as well as "Iran" have always been and will continue to be unstable concepts in the making.

The Essays (in sequential order)

The chapters by Osmund Bopearachchi and Grant Parker both address geographical and cultural understandings of "India" around the turn of the first millennium CE. Whether in material or textual terms, these understandings have been strongly mediated through Achaemenid political presence in the northwestern reaches of the subcontinent, specifically the area spanning the Panjab (partly in modern Pakistan) through eastern Afghanistan.

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[17] For the scholarly predilection toward subjects dating to the sixteenth century and later, see e.g. Hermann and Speziale 2010; Patel and Leonard 2012; and de Bruijn and Busch 2014. The volumes emerging from French academia furnish some respite from the early modern and modern biases: cf. Delvoye 1995; Alam, Delvoye and Gaborieu 2000. Nevertheless, only a few contributions in these last two works and the others provide exceptions to the overwhelming emphasis on literary/textual production.

[18] The authors go on to say that "enhanced mobility [was] one of the constitutive features of early modernity itself" – an assertion requiring re-examination in light of the extensive mobilities evidenced principally in material, non-literary remains from prehistory onward. Cf. the various contributions in *The Growth of Civilizations* (Habib ed. 2002), together with the essays esp. by Bopearachchi and Daryaee in the present volume, and Subrahmanyam (1996) for the pre-Mughal migrations into India from the Iranian world.

Bopearachchi emphasizes the significance of material culture for the study of pre-modern periods in his analysis of coins from the Pushkhalāvaṭī/Shaikhan Dehri coin hoard, and the *Śakuntalā* iconography of a ringstone, published here for the first time. The author firmly dates the Shaikhan Dehri hoard – discovered in 2007 in a garden near Peshawar (Pakistan) – to the establishment of an Achaemenid satrapy in northwestern India in the fifth century BCE, but considers it to be important evidence for the continued cultural autonomy of this easternmost imperial province. By this time, the region was well equipped both technologically and iconographically to issue coinage that circulated in local and transregional networks, maintaining customs already in place prior to Achaemenid political presence. In his analysis of the *Śakuntalā* ringstone and more generally the prevailing theory of the technology transfer of large-scale stone architecture (along with some iconography) from late Achaemenid Iran to Maurya India (c. 320-180 BCE), Bopearachchi re-emphasizes the cultural autonomy of the latter region: rather than interpreting the work of local stone workers as mere imitation of Achaemenid prototypes, he insists on its classification as definitively *Indian*, in keeping with “the narrative force [that] is the invisible thread binding every form of Indian art.”

Parker takes up the far-reaching conceptual consequences of the Achaemenids’ eastward expansion, within the Mediterranean – and specifically Roman – *ecumene*. He discerns two Roman methods of consuming India, which were often conflated but in reality distinguishable: one, subcontinental India as the land of natural abundance that was enriching itself thanks to Roman avarice; and the other, northwestern India (Panjab-eastern Afghanistan), which represented the edge of the world and, in a conquering emperor’s hands, would signal his world dominance. But, whence this idea of “India” as imperial prize among the Romans? Parker traces its genealogy to the Achaemenids. The Asian campaigns of Alexander (355-323 BCE) – whether as historical figure or accretion of collective memory – aid in overcoming the temporal dissonance: Alexander’s own virtually unstoppable drive to envelop the world within an empire of his won was actually following the momentum set by Achaemenid expansion eastward. He delivered to the pre-modern western world, not necessarily his own perception of the land he reached, but rather one strongly filtered through his Achaemenid predecessors’ politically more enduring – though, according to Bopearachchi, culturally ineffectual – presence.

The following papers by Touraj Daryaee and Frantz Grenet identify possible communications of courtly practices between the Indic and Iranian cultural spheres, with Grenet especially testing the limits of a *longue durée* approach in his linkage of Achaemenid Iran and Mughal India. It is noteworthy that in both essays, Alexander is again a pivotal figure, in these cases for the conveyance of court ceremonial across space and time.

Daryaee begins by questioning the meaning of the ᶜAbbāsid Caliph Harūn al-Rashīd’s (r. 786-809) gift of a white elephant to the Holy Roman Emperor Charlemagne (r. 800-814). In light of the long history of demoniac associations with elephants in Zoroastrian/Sassanian and early Islamic texts, why would the paramount ruler of Islam gift such a beast to his counterpart in Christendom? The author proposes that a sub-current of elephantine royal symbolism, probably originating in India, persisted into late Sassanian times, providing a reference point for the ᶜAbbāsid Caliph. Daryaee relies on both visual-material and textual evidence to trace the complicated itinerary of the white elephant's royal symbolism from Alexander's encounter with India in the fourth century BCE to the ninth-century CE courts at Baghdad and Aachen. Interweaving the cultural strands of Alexander's Bactrian colonies with Parthian – eventually Sassanian – lands, the analysis attests to the seamless continuity in dialogue between the Indic and Iranian cultural worlds well after the rise of Islam in the seventh century.

Similar to Daryaee's method of positing a source (and thus an explanation) for an otherwise mysterious courtly practice, Grenet re-examines the Mughal emperor Humāyūn's (r. 1530-40, 1555-6) seemingly eccentric *bisāt-i nishāt*, or Carpet of Mirth. Considered one of several royal practices from Humāyūn's reign that his son and successor Akbar (r. 1556-1605) discarded as "embarrassing quirks" (see also Anooshahr in this volume), Grenet salvages *bisāt-i nishāt* as the interpretation and implementation of an ancient Iranian royal protocol. The genealogy of this protocol had been forgotten by the early modern period, and thus no longer commanded currency among the Mughals. Once again, Alexander emerges as indebted to the Achaemenids, not only for his own imperial aspirations (as argued by Parker), but also for aspects of his court ceremonial. Indeed, his adaptation of Achaemenid royal practices was instrumental in conveying them to early modern posterity *via* the medieval Islamic mystical traditions. With this analysis, Grenet methodologically opens the door for future elucidations of unexplained "inventions," both during Humāyūn's reign and beyond.

Although addressing differing time periods, the contributions by Ali Anooshahr and Sudipta Sen treat Persian textual genres other than the strictly literary/poetic, adducing further evidence to the fluid intertextuality between the Indic and Iranian spheres well into the period of growing British commercial-political presence in India.

Continuing in the vein of Grenet, Anooshahr further illuminates the Mughal emperor Humāyūn's apparently unorthodox performances of kingship. Not only did Humāyūn adhere to an arcane courtly protocol whose significance was lost on contemporary courtiers (cf. Grenet), he allied himself with the Shaṭṭarīs, a Ṣūfī order setting itself apart from others in early modern India given its unabashed quest for political power. Anooshahr explains this distinctness in light of the Shaṭṭarīs' origins in early sixteenth-century Iran, where Ṣūfī orders such as the Ṣafawīyya (the initially Sunni-affiliated Safavids) had themselves built a state through political maneuvering and militant action. In contrast to the indirect but powerful grass-roots influence of the Chishtīs in India, for example, the Shaṭṭarīs promoted an admittedly bizarre, "concrete" and egalitarian mysticism, wherein prescribed rituals available to *all* prepared initiates (rather than only the divinely chosen) could result in the total control of politically powerful individuals and hence the effective wielding of political power. Anooshahr's essay not only elucidates a specific connectivity in India-Iran Ṣūfī networks, it throws a human light on the precarious beginnings of what came to be an illustrious dynastic line: Not unlike his Persianate (and surely other) predecessors, the desperate quest for power and its consolidation led the beleaguered Humāyūn to take recourse in alternative, seemingly "fringe" state-building measures, which were readily renounced by his more firmly ensconced successors who, moreover, needed to cultivate *au courant* and cosmopolitan personas.[19]

Sen's re-examination of *Sair al-Muta'ākhirīn* (1779-80) by the statesman Ghulām Ḥusain Ṭabaṭabā'ī, a native of Patna in present-day Bihar, northeastern India, brings this volume's analytical thrust into the period of the British East India Company's (EIC) ascendancy in India. Sen goes beyond other interpretations of the *Sair*, recently described as emblematic of "a transitional, 'early modern' phase in the writing of Indian history": the essay provides insight into the gray areas between an early modern Indian political actor's successive loyalties to the Nawabs of Bengal and the EIC, the social-political vicissitudes of his lifetime and his own responses to them (as legible in the *Sair),* and the continuities and ruptures between this actor's perceptive framework and the Persian *tārīkh* tradition in India (traceable in its beginnings to the twelfth century). Thereby Sen brings into vivid focus the necessity outlined by Muzaffar Alam of redefining *sabk-i hindī* (see above), no longer as a degenerate Persian literary production emerging outside Iran, but rather a cohering series of developments beginning with the earliest Persian writing in India in the eleventh century and continuing well into the modern period.

The final two essays in the volume by Afshin Marashi and Alka Patel focus on nationalism, one of the twentieth century's most distinguishable features. Marashi analyzes the agendas and mechanisms behind the Indian Parsis' (fortuitous?) concordance with the Pahlavi state's (1925-1979) "neo-classicist" revival of ancient Iran in the service of Iranian nationalism. Patel's work treats the twentieth-century Persian-language scholarship on a twelfth-century dynasty, addressing the impact of nationalism on scholarly production not only in India and Iran but also Afghanistan, the literal space between the two loosely bounded cultural worlds, all of which acquired fixed "national" boundaries only well into the twentieth century.

With the term "textual philanthropy," Marashi identifies one of the primary methods by which Bombay-based entities funded by prosperous Parsis worked toward the betterment of the status of Iran's remaining Zoroastrians in the early 1900s: by inviting Iranian scholars of Zoroastrianism (many also scholars of ancient Iran in general) to research and write in India and, most importantly, publishing their work in book form and circulating it throughout Iran. Conversely, this intellectual production also helped disseminate the Pahlavi state's nationalist revivalism of ancient Iran (including Zoroastrianism) among the Parsi communities of India based in Bombay, Puna, and parts of Gujarat. Thus, Marashi's essay elucidates the continuing circulation of people and ideas between India and Iran in the twentieth century, facilitated by the convergent goals of a religious "minority" and a constitutional monarchy looking to Iran's ancient past for the region's – eventually the nation's – modern identity.

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[19] Such was the case with the twelfth-century Ghurids of Afghanistan (see below in main text), in their early alliance with the increasingly heterodox Karrāmīyya. After the Ghurids' definitive re-occupation of Ghazna in 1175, and particularly after their successful campaigns in northern India in the early 1190s, the dynasty abruptly distanced themselves from the Karrāmīyya. Thereafter, the two principal sultans pledged allegiance to the Shafiᶜī and Ḥanāfī schools, in harmony with their two main bases of power at Herat and Ghazna (respectively). See esp. Flood 2005 and the essay by Patel in this volume.

Patel's essay addresses the various nationalisms of already bounded nation-states and their impact on scholarship. Reversing currently favored methodological approaches to objects *as texts*, Patel analyzes four twentieth-century Persian-language texts *as objects*, precisely to gain insight into the specific moments and locations of nationalism. Published in Iran and Afghanistan between 1968 and 2009, the four monographs all focus on the Ghurids (c. 1150-1215), an Afghani dynasty with Persianate aspirations that, in contrast to the Persian-language historiography, has been little studied in western-language works on the medieval Persianate world. While the Ghurids have been prominent in Afghani scholarship on Afghanistan (perhaps understandably), Patel nonetheless notes methodological shifts in these works over the last 50 years, attributable to the differing inflections of Afghani nationalism over time. Equally noteworthy is the Iranian scholarship on the dynasty, which has implicitly subsumed Afghanistan into a Persianate world whose center is the monolithically conceived nation-state of Iran. Remarkably, in this historiography works from post-Independence India – particularly those of the Nationalist historians headed by R.C. Majumdar (1888-1980) – appeared as important secondary and even primary sources, at times translated *verbatim*. The circulation of intellectual production between twentieth-century India and Iran, then, extended beyond the "textual philanthropy" of the Parsis to include Indian scholarship on the medieval Iranian world.

As noted above, it appears that investigative gazes on the Indic and Iranian cultural spheres, while still transregional, have nonetheless undergone a marked winnowing from *longue durée* approaches to focus largely on the early modern period. The ensuing contributions, then, aim to broaden again the scholarly perspective to encompass a transtemporal examination of the links between "India" and "Iran." The ultimate goal of the volume is twofold: to bring forth the little or unknown specifics of *événements*; and hence also to enrich the spanning arc or *structure* of the transtemporal connectivity between these geo-cultural regions. In the end, no single work can elucidate all the significant events of this Braudelian *structure* – hence the richness of the concept itself. Nonetheless, the gathering and dialogue of various disciplines goes a long way in reminding us that *India* and *Iran* themselves will always be multifaceted ideas with differing manifestations.

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ACHAEMENIDS AND MAURYANS: EMERGENCE OF COINS AND PLASTIC ARTS IN INDIA

Osmund Bopearachchi

Between 329 and 326 BCE, Alexander the Great's conquest of the eastern satrapies of the Persian Empire (Bactria, Sogdiana, Paropamisadae, Archosia, Seistan and Gandhāra) changed the geo-political map of the region with farreaching consequences. The Greek general conquered territories as far as the Indus Valley in present-day Pakistan in his quest to annex the Achaemenid Empire (550-330 BCE) founded by Cyrus the Great (r. 576–530 BCE) and expanded Darius I (r. 522-486 BCE) and Xerxes I (r. 486 -465 BCE) until it stretched from Macedonia in the north, to Egypt in the west, and the Indus Valley in the east. Herodotus (III, 90-94) provides a list of peoples making up the eastern empire as well as the amount of ~~the~~ tribute demanded of each: "*Among the people of Bactria and ...* (?) *pay 360 talents and the Indians 360 talents as a tribute to the Great King.* The famous staircase reliefs of the Apadana in *Persepolis,* the *capital* of the *Persian* kingdom, depict various tributary delegations including Gandhārians, Bactrians, Sogdians, Arachosians and Indians of the eastern satrapies.[1] Achaemenid political control of these areas is indicated by the presence of royal Achaemenid *darics* (gold coins) and *sigloi* (silver coins) depicting running archers in the archaic kneeling position, or half-length archers, in the Tchaman-i-Hazouri hoard[2] near Kabul, among the Oxus treasure[3] and in the Bhir Mound (Taxila).[4]

Despite clear evidence of Achaemenid control, the absence of any trace of Persian palatial architecture or art in the excavated contemporaneous sites in the Indus Valley such as Bhir Mound in Taxila[5] or Charsadda[6] in Peshawar, has long puzzled archaeologists and art historians. The town plan of the Bhir Mound, for example, is characterised by very narrow streets with irregular residential ground plans and little evidence of city planning - most of the streets are quite disorganized compared to the city plans of contemporary Greek cities or main Persian cities, suggesting a certain level of independence of the eastern provinces.[7]

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[1] See P. Briant, 1996, pp. 184-96; E. F. Schmidt, 1953: pl. 40 for the Gandhārans and Pl. 41 for the Bactrians. Recently published Aramaic documents from Bactria add to the growing body of evidence on the economic and political activities of the Achaemenids in the east. See Naveh and Shaked 2012.

[2] For eight *sigloi* in the Tchaman-i-Hazouri hoard, see D. Schlumberger, 1953, pp. 32 and 36.

[3] For eight *darics* and six *sigloi* in the Oxus treasure, see A.R. Bellinger, 1962, pp. 53 and 54.

[4] J. Marshall, 1951, p. 795.

The 'autonomy' revealed by urban settlements in the Persian satrapies situated south of the Hindu Kush mountains can also be seen in their monetary policy.[8] While the whole empire accepted the Achaemenid *darics* and *sigloi* as the legal tender, Indian satraps issued their own coinage consisting of curved and punch-marked bars, which the English have agreed to call "bent bars."

We have shown elsewhere that that these coins are the same as those used by the Indian ruler Omphi (later to be known as Taxiles), the prince of Taxila, to pay a tribute to Alexander so that he would not destroy his kingdom.[9] Quintus Curtius notes that in the spring of 327 BCE, while Alexander was moving towards Taxila, Omphi let the conqueror know through a messenger that he was prepared to offer him his kingdom. Alexander, satisfied with the attitude of the Indian king, confirmed him in his rights, titles and functions (VIII, 12, 4-14). We learn that later Taxiles offered Alexander eighty talents of coined silver, "*signati argenti LXXX talenta*".[10] The *argentum signatum* to which Quintus Curtius alludes must certainly have been the "bent bars" mentioned above.

The question of when the first monetary issues appeared in north northwestern India has caused much ink to flow. Since the discovery of a coin hoard in 1924 on the ancient site of Bhir Mound in Taxila, composed of 1,167 "bent bars," numismatists have considered these types of coins to be the first issues of the region.[11] John Allan[12] and H.C. Walsh[13] dated the burial of the hoard of Bhir Mound to the fifth or fourth century BCE, basing their arguments on three foreign coins that were part of the hoard. The presence of two coins of Alexander ~~the Great~~ and of one coin of Philip (III) Arrhidaios, assassinated in 317 BCE, all the three in mint state as well as a much worn Persian *siglos*, allowed them to justify this dating.

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[5] J. Marshall, 1951, vol. I, pp. 87-111.

[6] Several excavations were carried out in Charsadda since 1882. For a summary of these diggings, see R. Coningham & I. Ali, 2007, pp. 21-4. None of these excavations brought forth any impressive architectural elements belonging to the occupational layers attributed to the Achaemenid period.

[7] For an overview of the site plan see J. Marshall, 1951, vol. III, pl. 2.

[8] Geographically and politically the natural barrier of the Hindu Kush mountain range divided Central Asia into two important and distinct zones: Bactria and Sogdiana in the North and Arachosia, Paropamisadae and Gandhāra in the South.

[9] O. Bopearachchi 1999-2000, p. 69-73.

[10] "After this, having offered the king the honours of hospitality during three days, on the fourth he showed him how much wheat he had provided the troops brought by Hephestion with and gave him and all his courtiers golden crowns, and, apart from this, eighty talents of coined silver: but Alexander, extremely satisfied by the generosity of the prince, left him everything that he had received, and he added one thousand talents of loot that he had brought with him, with many gold vases, and others of silver..." (Quintus Curtius, VIII, 12, 15-16).

In 2007, the discovery of a coin hoard composed of "bent bars" and of the coins that D. Schlumberger[14] called "a new type", as well as virgin flans and silver ingots, changed our ideas concerning the monetary circulation and origin of the first coins issued in India.[15] A Pakistani collector informed me that a man digging in his garden to gather earth for bricks instead came upon this hoard, weighing 14 kg, in the village of Shaikhan Dehri in the ancient city of Pushkalavati. Without claiming to resolve all the problems concerning these issues, we have attempted in 2009 to introduce some new evidence that has allowed us to reflect on this issue from a different point of view.[16]

The composition of this hoard recalls the one exhumed by chance in 1933 at the site Tchaman-i Hazouri, in the eastern part of Kabul. Fifteen years later, D. Schlumberger (1953, pp. 3-49) published a number of these coins, then kept in the Kabul Museum. This part of the hoard included 30 coins of various Greek cities, a lot of 34 Athenian coins, of which one was a crude imitation, 8 *sigloi*, 14 curved ingots with a single punch-mark, and 29 coins of a 'new type'.[17] It was these 29 coins that demonstrated the evolution of minting, from the first ones struck with two different dies up to those made using multiple independent punches. We have elsewhere proposed a classification for this coinage.[18]

Unfortunately, we did not obtain access to all the coins that were originally found in the 2007 hoard. Five years after its discovery, some of these coins have reached the London antiquities market (**fig. 1**).[19] In 2009, we published the ones we were able to examine personally. The new hoard contained a silver *tetradrachm* of Attic weight commonly called an "Athenian owl," which thanks to its stylistic characteristics we can date to approximately 520 BCE (**fig. 2**).[20] Although the coin is much worn, the weight of 17.21 g corresponds to the theoretical weight of Attic *tetradrachms*. We know that the first series of Athens (referred to as "Wapenmünzen"), essentially consisting of *didrachms* and *drachms* struck with various types such as the amphora, the triskeles, the scarab, the bull's head etc., were replaced well before the end of the sixth century BCE by the "owls"; these bore on the obverse a helmeted head of Athena and on the reverse an owl, symbol of the tutelary divinity. On this coin (**fig. 2**) the usual Greek legend "ΑΘΕ" is off-flan. Although opinions are divided regarding the appearance of these first "owls," the majority of numismatists believe that they should be dated to the time of the Pisistratides [546-510 BCE].[21] If there was certainty that this coin was the only one in the hoard that came from the Greek world, we could have proposed a *terminus post quem* for the burial of the hoard of the fifth century BCE. However, it is probable that the hoard contained other datable Greek issues to which we have not had access, which requires a certain amount of caution in proposing a precise burial date. It is, however, not impossible that the hoard of Shaikhan Dehri is older than that of Kabul, which was dated by Schlumberger to about 380 BCE, thanks to the presence of an Athenian imitation.[22]

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[11] On this discovery see J. Marshall 1951, p. 105.

[12] J. Allan 1936, p. XVI.

[13] E.H.C. Walsh 1951, p. 843.

[14] See D. Schlumberger, 1953, pl. III, nos. 15-20; also O. Bopearachchi, 1999-2000, p. 72, pl. I-III, Nos.1-2.

[15] A preliminary study of this hoard was published by O. Bopearachchi, 2009.

[16] O. Bopearachchi, 2009.

[17] D. Schlumberger, 1953, pp. 31-40.

[18] The classification was based on another eight coins that came from the same hoard which entered the Cabinet des Médailles (Bnf, Paris) through the intercession of Marc Le Berre, architect for the DAFA, see O. Bopearachchi, 1999-2000, pp. 21-4, pls. III-VI. The hoard itself was discovered by a team of workers digging the foundations of a house. It contained coins and fragments of jewellery. Joseph Hackin (at the time director of the DAFA) in a letter to Henri Seyrig states that this hoard seems to have contained about one thousand silver pieces. Coins from the hoard also entered the collections of the museums of Calcutta and Lahore and the British Museum

The hoard of Shaikhan Dehri also included curved and punch-marked bars of the weight of Achaemenid *siglos*, or 5.50 g, and also of double the weight (11 g.). However, we were aware only of a single bar weighing 10.44 g (**fig. 3**).[23] In our 2009 article, we correctly assumed that part of the hoard, hidden by the finders, would one day appear on the market and, indeed, one year later a group of coins from the same hoard was published by Alexander Fishman but with the wrong provenance.[24] The piece published here and elsewhere (see also O. Bopearachchi, 2009, fig. 2) is a short bar that we attribute to the

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[19] The dealer did not allow us to examine them. Seen from outside, they all bear a motif within an incuse formed by a network of eight radiating lines disposed around a central ring in the middle of which is a dot. Three of the eight rays end in a small incomplete circle. The dealer has also added to the lot some imperial punch-marked coins from a different provenance (see **fig. 1**).

[20] O. Bopearachchi, 2009, p. 47, fig. 1.

[21] Concerning this see H. Nicolet-Pierre, 2002, p. 140-2.

[22] D. Schlumberger (1953, p. 4) reasoned: "Without the presence in the hoard of coin No. 64, we would have placed the burial around 400. But the said piece, which is a copy with a blundered legend of an Athenian tetradrachm, obliges us to lower this estimate somewhat: the style, the eye in profile of the goddess, indicate a model later than 394-393 and if we take into account the time that was needed for this model to spread and be imitated, and for our specimen to reach far away Afghanistan, we agree that a date earlier than 380 is not plausible."

[23] O. Bopearachchi, 2099, p. 47, fig. 2.

[24] A. Fishman, 2010 gives vicinity of ancient Taxila as the provenance of this hoard.

Paropamisadae, because this type of coin also appeared in the Tchaman-i Hazouri hoard.[25] Its length of 24mm is close to the length between 25 mm to 30 mm of the series attributed to the Paropamisadae. On the contrary, the bent bars found in the Taxila region are longer: between 35 and 55 mm.[26] On this piece in the hoard of Shaikhan Dehri (**fig. 3**), the convex face bears some traces of the surface (probably a wooden plank) on which the flan was placed before being punch-marked. On the concave face, two similar punch-marks have been stamped on each extremity of the slightly curved bar, but because of a lack of space, the two punch-marks partially overlap. The resulting motif is a network of radial lines disposed around a central ring.

The Shaikhan Dehri hoard is composed of many other types such as a piece (**fig. 4**) weighing 10.13 g (21 x 15 mm) with the concave face bearing within an incuse circle the same symbol in the form of a network of radial lines disposed around a central ring. The convex face is characterised by a motif of indistinct lines. We have also published a group of single-faced coins of the hoard (**fig. 5**).[27]

The Shaikhan Dehri hoard also contained virgin flans (see **fig. 6**).[28] These flans were made using two different techniques. The first is called "the droplet" and consists of melting a silver ingot and then pouring the molten metal in the form of a droplet.[29] The second technique is to prepare quadrangular flans that can be cut from metal bands and whose weight is adjusted by clipping their corners.[30]

In our opinion, the most important element of the Shaikhan Dehri hoard is the presence of four ingots, each weighing about 400 g (see **figs. 7 & 8**). The most notable one weighs 398 g and measures 8.5 mm in height and 6 mm in length. The weight of the ingots corresponds approximately to 72 Achaemenid *sigloi*. They bear a punch mark on the top that guarantees the weight and purity of the silver. The ingots of this type were destined to be melted down and then struck as coins and, until now, not known in either India or in Greece during this period. The excavations conducted by the DAFA in the ancient city of Aï Khanoum, under the direction of Paul Bernard, brought to light four gold ingots dated to *circa* the third or second century BCE.[31] They were the oldest known examples until the discovery of the four silver ingots from the Shaikhan Dehri hoard.

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[25] D. Schlumberger 1953, pl. III, Nos. 1-12. *Cf.* O. Bopearachchi 1999-2000, p. 72, pl. III, Nos. 14-16.

[26] O. Bopearachchi 1999-2000, pp. 21-3, pl. III-VI, Nos. 14-38.

[27] O. Bopearachchi, 2009, p. 48, fig. 4 (10.13 g; 21 x 15 mm); fig. 5 (9.74 g, 19 x 18 mm); fig. 6 (2.83 g,12 mm).

[28] O. Bopearachchi, 2009, p. 49, fig. 9, they respectively weigh 3.02 g, 2.99 g, 2.98 g, 2.89g. and 2.88 g.

[29] O. Bopearachchi, 2009, p. 49, see fig. 9E.

[30] O. Bopearachchi, 2009, p. 49, see figs. 9A, 9B, 9C, 9D, 9F. On these two techniques, see D. Rajgor, 2001, pp. 12-6.

[31] For colour photographs see *Afghanistan: Hidden Treasures from the National Museum, Kabul,* p. 107, pls. 5-8. These four gold ingots weight respectively 322g, 189g, 103g and 259g.

The excavations carried out in Emona (Laibach, modern Ljubljana) in 1910 led to the discovery of two silver ingots of the Aquileia mint. Both bear the effigy of Magnentius (r. 350-353 CE) struck using the obverse die of a *maiorina*.[32] The first ingot weighs 640 g and the second 319 g. The weight of these two ingots corresponds, with an approximation of a few grams, to two and one pounds respectively.[33] The ingots found in the Shaikhan Dehri hoard have the same characteristics, but are eight centuries older than the ingots of Magnentius. We are also certain that these ingots were to be melted down to create virgin flans.

The metrological analyses done by Maryse Blet-Lemarquand at the laboratory of the CNRS-Orleans by LA-ICP-MS (Laser Ablation Inductively Coupled Plasma Mass Spectrometry) on the punched coins, virgin flans and silver ingots from the Shaikhan Dehri hoard clearly show that, apart from two exceptions, all the coins and flans have the same composition and trace elements as the silver ingots.[34] It is well-known that the purity of the first issues of Persian *sigloi* was 97-98%. On the contrary, the purity of the silver ingot and majority of the coins from the Shaikhan Dehri hoard varies from 92% to 90%. The presence of 5% to 8% copper and 1.5% to 1.7% lead clearly differentiates these coins from the Persian royal issues.

We now have proof that India already possessed the techniques of smelting and purifying silver in the fifth century BCE, a fact confirmed by Kautilya – Vishnu Gupta or Chanakya [unclear structure – other names of Kautilya?], counsellor of the emperor Chandragupta (r. 322-298 BCE), founder of the Mauryan dynasty – who in his *Arthaśāstra* (chapter VI) describes in detail the minting activities of the Indians. It would be interesting to carry out analyses using protonic activation on the ingots and the virgin flans to discover the origin of the silver, since this metal is known from the deposits of Badhakshan and Rajastan. These might reveal whether it is the same metal that was used to strike the medallions called "of Poros" that we believe were struck during the lifetime of Alexander and were issued in the Jhelum valley after his victory over the Indian king.[35] The presence of virgin flans and of silver ingots in this hoard is proof that these coins were struck on the spot, i.e. in the ancient town of Pushkalavati (Shaikhan Dehri), an important crossroads of the ancient network of trade.

What have we learned from this hoard? These diverse coins are the very first local issues of northwestern India and were struck when the territories were under the protection of the Persian Great King. We must therefore re-evaluate their dating and place them towards the fifth century BCE.

The coins that we have published are part of the issues that circulated to the south of the Hindu Kush in Indian territories. Numerous fractions of these bars have been discovered: *siglos* (5.50 g), double *sigloi* (11 g), half *siglos* (2.75-2.80 g), quarters of a *siglos* (1.40 g), sixths of a *siglos* (0.90 g), eighths of a *siglos* (0.70 g), twentieths of a *siglos* (0.27 g) and even fortieths of a *siglos* (0.13 g).[36] The Shaikhan Dehri hoard has, for the time being, only revealed three of these fractions, double *sigloi*[37] half *siglos*[38] and the quarter *siglos*,[39] as well as the virgin flans.[40] It is quite probable that among the coins that we have not been able to examine there are other denominations. The number of these fractions of the punch-marked bars in circulation was certainly large, because in the first deposit of Mir Zakah alone there were 560 specimens.[41] The second Mir Zakah deposit contained thousands.[42] Hundreds of these have been discovered all over Pakistani territory.[43] The inevitable conclusion is that, even before the arrival of Alexander, an abundant and systematic production of coins existed in the regions to the south of the Hindu Kush.[44]

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[32] This series was most likely called *pecunia maiorina* (literally, "somewhat larger money"), possibly worth two *nummi*. This resulted from a monetary reform occurred in 348 CE, as the authorities tried to restore a higher billon standard with heavier coins.

[33] P. Bastien 1983, p. 92-97.

[34] M. Blet-Lemarquand, 2009.

[35] O. Bopearachchi 2005, p. 176-193. Concerning the chronology of these coins, see F. Holt, 2003.

Now, we turn to Persian and Mauryan relations. It is believed that west-Asian or Perso-Hellenistic art became popular during the Mauryan period following the unexpected death of Alexander in 323 BCE, when the Mauryan king Chandragupta established a strong, centralized state with a complex administration at Pāṭaliputra.[45] Chandragupta gave the Mauryan Empire its configuration and its extent: the largest India had known until that of the Mughals (c. 1526-1858). This empire does not precisely coincide with geographers' notions of the "Indian subcontinent" since it does not include southern India (today's Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Kerala and Karnataka), and spilled over into Afghanistan (excluding Bactria, to the north) and into Baluchistan, taken from the Greeks in 305 BCE. Seleucos I (r. 305-281 BCE)[46] agreed to cede the Indian territories south of the Hindu Kush to Chandragupta in exchange for a corps of 500 war elephants, in official recognition of the Mauryan authority over these regions.[47] The Mauryan king maintained friendly relationships with the Greeks: the Greek envoy Megasthenes (*circa* 350-290 BCE) resided for a considerable time at the court in Pāṭaliputra. The successor of Chandragupta, Bindusara (r. *circa* 297-274 BCE), stayed in contact with the Hellenistic monarchies of Syria and Egypt and also attempted, without success, to conquer the southern kingdoms.

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[36] O. Bopearachchi 1999-2000, p. 73.

[37] O. Bopearachchi, 2009, p. 47-8, see figs. 2-5.

[38] O. Bopearachchi, 2009, p. 49, see figs. 7A-7F.

[39] O. Bopearachchi, 2009, p. 49, see figs. 8A-8F

[40] O. Bopearachchi, 2009, p. 49, figs. 9A-9F.

[41] R. Curiel 1953, p. 73.

[42] O. Bopearachchi 2011 and particularly the photographs where these coins are visible among the other type of coins, plate below in p. 39.

[43] In the Bhir Mound hoard, discovered in 1924, these coins, described by Walsh as "minute coins", are represented by 79 specimens, J. Marshall 1951, p. 843-852.

[44] See with this regard O. Bopearachchi, 1999-2000, 2005 and 2011.

[45] See the chapter on "The Emergence of Empire: Mauyan India", in R. Thapar, 2002, pp. 174-208.

[46] Although, soon after the death of Alexander 323 BCE), Seleucus I was nominated as the satrap of Babylon in 320 BCE, his coronation took place only in 305 BCE.

[47] See P. Bernard, 1985, pp. 85-96.

Under the grandson of Chandragupta, Aśoka (r. *circa* 270 to 230 BCE), who started his career as governor of Taxila, the Mauryan Empire achieved its greatest expansion and Buddhism became the court religion. He brought the Maurya Empire to its territorial zenith thanks to his conquests extending ~~it~~ from the Hindu Kush to the foothills of the Himalayas, including Kashmir and perhaps also Khotan and Nepal, and engulfing Mysore ~~(~~to the south of Bangalore~~)~~. The bloody campaign against Kalinga was, in the words of Aśoka himself, a real war of annihilation: 150,000 prisoners deported, 100,000 killed, "and almost as many dead" from famine, illness, etc.The numbers are without doubt symbolic, but they show what a bloody example Aśoka made of his conquest.

If we believe Aśoka, this is what led him to convert to non-violence: "Piety and compassion seized him; and this weighed on him." [48] Under the influence of a monk he turned to Buddhism. He retreated to a monastery, became a vegetarian and began a pious life of pilgrimages, multiplying his donations not only to Buddhist monks, but also to Jains and Brahmans. He had wells dug in villages, founded hospitals for men and for animals, and had medicinal plants cultivated. He claimed to have raised 84,000 stūpas, none of which have been uncovered (they were built over by later reconstructions). After his death, the Mauryan Empire gradually entered a period of decline, until it completely vanished from the political arena by 184 BCE.[49]

Aśoka's India saw an entire series of changes: the appearance of epigraphy (inscriptions on stone being the only ones that survive), stone sculpture and architecture with motifs inspired by Persia and Greece. When L.A. Waddell launched his excavations at ancient Pāṭaliputra (modern Patna) in 1892, he was looking for Chandragupta's fabulous and prestigious city as described by Megasthenes, the Greek envoy of the Seleucids, who resided there for a considerable time and who noted that the Indian emperor built himself palaces directly modelled on Persepolis.[50] Waddell's excavations did not yield much. First of all, the old city was buried under the modern town which did not, and continues not to, leave much space for excavations. Waddell did bring to light remains of wooden beams arranged in a double row and wooden drains. The excavations also yielded monolithic single columns identical to those carrying edicts and inscriptions, found in several places in India,[51] and confirmed the importance of this town as described by Megastenes. It was surrounded by fortifications and moats which, apart from their military role, also protected it from the flooding of the Ganges.

Looking at borrowings from Persian art in early stone Buddhist monuments, 19th and early 20th century scholars such as John Marshall, Mortimer Wheeler, Percy Brown, and Niharranjan Ray put forward the so-called "Refugee Theory," proposing that Persian master-craftsmen came to India and were the teachers of early Indian sculptors and builders in stone. Other scholars such as V.S. Agrawala, John Irwin, and D. Devahuti have held that the early stonework was conceived by Indians alone.[52] Buddhist artistic expressions, originating from the Bharhut and Sāñcī stūpas, lead at a later stage to a codified art form. Although the construction of these stūpas may go back to the time of Aśoka, the reliefs attested in the *toranas* or *vedikās* cannot be dated before the Sunga period (circa 185-73 BCE). What, then, remains of the Aśokan period?

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[48] Second Greek inscription of Kandahar, translated by D. Schlumberger, 1964, pp. 126-140.

[49] R. Thapar, 1961.

[50] For the description of Pāṭaliputra left by Megasthenes in his *Indica*, see J.W. McCrindle, 1877.

[51] Wadell, 1892.

The best examples are the Aśokan pillars with their so-called bell-shaped capitals, decorated with honeysuckle or palmette motifs and smooth un-fluted shafts. Their polish and even their inspirations can be traced back to Persia.[53] There is no archaeological evidence to support V.S. Agrawala's opinion that the technique of polishing stone was a tradition dating back to Vedic times and inherited by Mauryan craftsmen.[54] However, too much emphasis on Medo-Achaemenid and Hellenistic origins, ideas, forms and motifs ignores the Indian traditions which played a vital role in this interaction. After all, we are dealing with the formation and origin of Indian art as a whole.

The treatment of animals on the Sārnāth abacus (*circa* third century BCE) is entirely Indian in subject, symbolism and inspiration (**fig. 9**). Moreover, though inspired by Persepolitan art, the bell-shaped capitals are free-standing and not structural as in Persepolis or Pasargadae. The pillars of West Asia were symbols of royalty designed to cater to personal, political and courtly needs.[55] Contrary to the opinion held by some art historians, the overall model for the monumental stone art of the formative period was religious rather than secular. Apart from the pillars found during the excavations of Pāṭaliputra, all the other architectural elements denoting a West Asian influence were found in a religious context, as at the monastic and ritual sites of Allāhābād, Ararāj, Bānsi, Lumbīni, Nandangarh, Rāmapūrvā, Sāñcī, Saṅkisā, Sārnāth, Vesālī, etc.[56]

In addition to the Aśokan pillars, much has been written about the identification and chronology of a group of statues first considered as royal images and later as Yakṣas. The chronological framework proposed by art historians for the statues of the Parkham Yakṣa and the Didarganji Yakṣa differs greatly. Taking the inscriptional and stylistic evidence into account, these can be dated to circa 150 BCE.[57] The second century BCE was the period when the first anthropomorphic images of Indian gods are thus far attested. They emerged independently without any inspiration from Persian art. Apart from the stone images, we also have the appearance of a series of sculptures of gods and goddesses of the Brahmanical pantheon, made of perishable materials like wood and clay.

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[52] For a critical analysis of these points of view, see S.P. Gupta, 1980, pp. 1-47, and above all pp. 284-7.

[53] S.P. Gupta, 1980, pp. 19-47; 80-128. For a recent analysis on this question, see H. Falk, 2006, pp. 139-153.

[54] V.S. Agrawala, 1968.

[55] S.P. Gupta, 1980, pp. 36-43.

[56] See H. Falk, 2006, pp. 158-61 (Allāhābād); pp. 162-3 (Ararāj); pp. 164-5 (Bānsi), pp. 171-181 (Lumbīni); pp. 184-6 (Nandangarh); pp. 195-202 (Rāmapūrvā); pp. 203-5 (Sāñcī); pp. 206-8 (Saṅkisā); pp.. 209-14 (Sārnāth); pp. 220-3 (Vesālī).

[57] For a summary of these arguments, see S. Rhie Quintanilla, 2007, pp. 26-33.

Very few art historians have paid attention to the bilingual silver coins of the Indo-Greek Agathocles, whose reign can be dated to the beginning of the 2nd century BCE, carrying a perfectly clear and explicit illustration of the first forms of *Vaiṣṇavaism in India*. Jean Filliozat correctly identified the divinity holding a *musala* (pestle) and a *hala* (plough) as Saṃkarṣaṇa-Balarāma and the one holding a *cakra* (wheel) and a *śaṅkha* (conch-shell) as Vāsudeva-Kṛṣṇa (**fig. 10**).[58] Rémy Audouin and Paul Bernard[59] correctly observed that the way these gods are depicted on the coins is not in accordance with contemporary Greek engraving, as one can observe on the Attic standard *tetradrachms* of the same Agathocles showing Zeus holding Hecate.[60] The lack of proportions, 'awkward rendering' of the feet, and disproportion of the 'headdress' led them to conclude that these coin dies were made by an Indian engraver.[61] We differ with this conclusion, believing that the dies were made by a well-experienced Greek engraver who, looking at existing statues of these two gods, did not grasp the symbolism of the Indian iconography. Furthermore, Gérard Fussman correctly noted that the half-curved element thought to be a hat was in reality a *chatra* or a parasol misunderstood by the engraver.[62] The *śaṅkha* (conch-shell) that Vāsudeva-Kṛṣṇa holds was understood to be a jar-like receptacle by the Greek engraver. Further examples from this formative period also show overlap with these examples, such as the early sculptures of the Bharhut[63] and Sāñcī stūpas (**fig. 11**)[64] where the feet are in side view similar to Agathocles' coins. Various attempts were made by numismatists to identify the human figures holding various attributes, appearing on the imperial series of the punch-marked coins dated to the 3rd century BCE. The recent article by Wilfried Pieper has proposed a comprehensive survey of these coins with Vaiṣṇava divinities.[65] The god most probably holding a plough in his raised left hand and pestle in his raised right hand is no doubt Balarāma.[66] We now have solid evidence to show the Bhāgavata cult was popular in these regions as early as the 3rd century BCE.

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[58] On the iconography of these two divinities, see J. Filliozat, 1973; O. Bopearachchi, 1991, Agathocles, series 9 and more recently S. Schmid, 2010, pp. 89-100.

[59] R. Audouin & P. Bernard, 1974, pp. 23-5. Nevertheless, it is necessary to emphasize here that although the dies were prepared by a Greek engraver the technique of making the flans was Indian. The quadrangular flans were cut from metal bands.

[60] O. Bopearachchi, 1991, Agathocles, series 1 & 3.

[61] R. Audouin & P. Bernard, 1974, p. 23.

[62] G. Fussman, 1989, p. n. 4.

[63] See for example, A. Cunningham, 1879, pls. XIV, XV, XX, Xxi, etc.

[64] J. Marshall and A. Foucher, 1940, vol. II, pl. LII, South pillar of the eastern gateway, lower panel.

[65] W. Pieper, 2014. Also see Pieper, 2013, pp. 162-3, nos. 122-3, pp. 168-70, nos. 151-3.

[66] W. Pieper, 2014, p. 54.

Assyrian winged hybrid animals consisting of the head of a man and the body of a lion or bull (ancient symbol of fertility), associated with Assyrian leadership, found their way into the reliefs of the Bharhut[67] and Sāñcī *toranas* through Persian intermediaries. The columns surmounted by a bell-shaped capital over which elephants, winged horses, goats or lions sit back-to-back and appear as palatial architectural elements on the Sāñcī *toranas* (**figs. 12. A. B.**) were no doubt of Achaemenid inspiration. These columns also continue to appear as architectural elements four hundred years later in Kushan Gandhāran reliefs (**figs. 13. A.-B.**). Similar horned and winged composite animals are represented in the medallions and columns of Sunga-period monuments[68] and in the reliefs of Sāñcī Stūpa 2, which are considered the most ancient among the stūpas at Sāñcī. The winged griffin-lion and bull reliefs in glazed brickwork in ancient Achaemenid Persia (530-330 BCE) undoubtedly served as their prototypes. [69] It is worth mentioning that these representations in early Buddhist reliefs do not appear as a central part of the narration, but rather as ornamental elements. It shows the capacity of Indian artists to absorb foreign elements and restructure them in an Indian context. Once absorbed, the ideas behind the imagery may have changed.

Specialized in ancient Greek and Roman art, colonial-period art historians of India found it difficult to comprehend Indian iconographic renderings. They qualified early Buddhist art as stereotyped, motionless, static, without depth, stiff and awkward.[70] V.A. Smith goes so far as to say that the sculpted representations of Aśokan pillars in Sunga and post-Sunga art are inferior copies of the splendid originals, because by that time foreign craftsmen and their descendants were no longer available.[71] He concluded that Sunga and post-Sunga art, though fascinating in content, could produce nothing approximating the technical excellence of Aśokan court art, which he considered a pure product of Persian artists.

It could be argued that the so-called ‘decadence’ of Sunga art, highlighted by V.A. Smith and many other art historians of the colonial period, is in reality the originality of early Indian art. Early post-Mauryan art is characterised by a highly advanced power of visualisation and narration which cannot be seen in contemporaneous western art. The narration of complex jātaka stories inside a single medallion in the railings of Bharhut is a good example (**fig. 14**). The viewer who knows the story takes pleasure in deciphering its major scenes. In the case of the Mahākapi jātaka, the main episodes are depicted in continuous narrative: the Bodhisattva born as the leader of a troop of monkeys enjoying the exquisite fragrance and flavour of mangoes; saving his fellow monkeys from the King's army by stretching himself over the river enabling the other monkeys to escape; lowering the monkey-king gently down to a piece of rag; and finally Brahmadatta, king of Varanasi conversing with the Monkey.

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[67] See for example, see A. Cunnigham, 1879, pls. X, XI, XII.

[68] For these types of images carved on the railings of Bharhut stūpa see A. Cunnigham, 1879, pls. XXXVI, 4, 5; and for Stūpa 2 of Sāñcī considered as the oldest of the three big Stūpas of the site, see J. Marshall and A. Foucher, 1940, vol. III, pl. LXXXIV, 56a, LXXXVII, 75a, XCI, 87a; for Sāñcī Stūpa no. 1, see J. Marshall and A. Foucher, 1940, pls. XXIV, XLI, XLII and very particularly pl. LX of the western gateway.

[69] See note 66.

[70] See for example, J. Marshall & A. Foucher, 1940, pp. 101-7.

[71] V.A. Smith, 1911.

The source for this type of visualization in art is to be found in the ring-stones (**fig. 15**) and disc-stones of Indian origin. Objects of beauty as well as a fine testament to the ancient Indian jeweller's skill, they are characterized by accuracy in proportions and definition. Usually dated to the second if not the third century BCE on archaeological evidence,[72] they are possibly the earliest examples in which human, plant and animal life merge within a framework of geometrical patterns. The plaque decorated with precious stones dated to the early second century BCE, found by French archaeologists in the treasury of Eucratides I's (r. *c*irca 170-145 BCE), palace at Ai Khanum and published in detail by Claude Rapin, is a masterpiece by virtue of the originality of its imagery as well as the technical quality of its inlay decoration.[73] Rapin sees the depiction of the legend of Śakuntalā as originating in Taxila. John Marshall correctly identified the scenes depicted on the terracotta plaque, now labelled as the disc of Bhita (found near Allahabad in North India), as those of the same legend.[74]

A hitherto unpublished and (unfortunately) broken schist disc recently found in Pakistan depicts four scenes (**fig. 16**). Although some scenes may possibly belong to Śakuntalā's story, further investigations are needed to confirm this. Evoking the disc of Bhita, the story narrated here takes place in the middle of a pastoral and rocky landscape, where a forest is indicated by three different trees: a palm tree, a flowering plant, and one with big leaves. In the upper part of the scene, a man and a woman converse in front of a tile-roof house built on a rocky landscape.[75] Behind the house is most likely a paddy stack. A barrier or railing, against which stand the two persons in conversation, extends further and plunges toward large rocks. A chariot driven by two horses and transporting a couple advances from the right side of the scene towards the left.[76] In the middle of the disc, two men seated on rocks are engaged in a conversation. At the bottom left, once again a man and a woman appear, the man with his hands in *añjali-mudra*. Since the disc is broken at the lower edge, the architectural element in front of them remains illegible, being possibly a barrier like the one at the top of the disc, or a vessel.

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[72] For an exhaustive discussion on these objects, see Gupta, 1980, pp. 53-72.

[73] C. Rapin, 1996, this is the English translation of the chapter from his remarkable book on the Aï Khnaoum place treasure: *Fouilles d'Aï Khnaoum VIII. La trésorerie du palais hellénistique d'Aï Khanoum* (*MDAFA*, XXXIII), De Bocard, Paris, 1992.

[74] J. Marshall, 1911-12, pp. 29-94. For a drawing of this terracotta plaque, see C. Rapin, 1996, fig. 38. On the different stages of the development of the story of Śakuntalā in Indian literature, see R. Thapar, 1999.

[75] Architecturally this house shares close affinities with the two houses depicted on the medallion on the Bharhut Stūpa narrating the story of Anāthapiṇḍada offering the Jetavana Park to the Buddha Gautama by covering it with coins, see A. Cunningham, 1879, pl. XXVIII. On the Bhita disc the house is not depicted, instead a hut and a woman lifting a basket appear in the middle to the left of the disc.

These last two scenes are not depicted on the Bhita disc. If we follow the interpretation proposed by J.M. Marshall for the Bhita disc, we may deduce that the couple conversing in front of the house behind the barrier are Duṣyanta and Śakuntalā. The rider of the *biga* and the woman standing behind him, as well as the woman and man at the bottom left side, could also be the same legendary couple. The role of the two men seated on the rocks in the middle is not at all clear. As mentioned earlier, since the lower part of the present disc is broken, we are unable to ascertain whether the four remaining scenes represent the story of Śakuntalā as narrated in the *Mahābhārata*. However, the salient point here is that, similar to the Bhita disc, this new disc also narrates a story probably of Śakuntalā if not another popular legend.

In 2005, a group of small bronze libation goblets (*lota*) came to light in Baluchistan Province's Zhob valley (Pakistan), corresponding to the ancient satrapy of Arachosia.[77] Like the ring-stones and disc-stones, these artefacts are datable to the late Mauryan period. Apart from the two goblets already published by Jean-François Jarrige,[78] we have personally seen four more, which will soon be published in detail.[79] We have selected one small vase (ht. 9 cm, dimension 10.2 cm) to demonstrate how these minute objects carry a great deal of iconographic details narrating a story (**fig. 17. A**).[80]

The first published goblet of the lot, according J.-F. Jarrige, depicts the story of the son of Emperor Aśoka, Prince Kunala, and his Queen Padmavati. As it is narrated in the *Aśokāvadāna*, another of Aśoka's wives, Tishyaraksha, in a fit of jealousy blinded Prince Kunala at a young age. Alternatively, some stories go on to say that Kunala was sent to Taxila to put down a rebellion, which he managed to do peacefully. Years later, Kunala came to Aśoka's court in the disguise of a wandering minstrel and accompanied by his favourite wife Kanchanmala. When he greatly pleased the king by his music, the king wanted to reward him. At this, the minstrel revealed himself as prince Kunala and demanded his inheritance. The second story narrated on the goblet, according to J.-F. Jarrige, is King Aśoka paying homage to the Bodhi tree. Tishyaraksha was jealous of the Tree, and three years after she became queen, she caused the tree to be killed by the use of maṇḍu thorns. The tree, however, grew again and a great monastery was attached to the Bodhimanda called the Bodhimanda Vihara.[81] Jarrige has cautiously deciphered the significance of each episode of this story. The goblet, here published for the first time, also seems to narrate the same story, but with omissions and additions.

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[76] On the Bhita disc, the chariot is harnessed with four horses and it advances towards the right. On our disc (**fig. 16**) the third person seizing the horses by the reins is not depicted.

[77] Some of the scenes on these goblets evoke the ones incised on the vase discovered near the Gondala Hills in Himachal Pradesh, now in the British Museum, published by E. Errington in The Crossroads of Asia, pp. 162-4. However, the vase in the British Museum is technically and chronologically different from the Baluchistan goblets. The Gondala example is incised while those from Baluchistan are embossed (repoussé). Moreover, the Baluchistan goblets predate the Gondala find.

[78] J.-F. Jarrige, 2006, dates these goblets to the 1st century BCE.

[79] Forthcoming book *When East met West: Gandhāran Art Revisted.*

[80] With the kind courtesy Mr. Tatsuzo Kaku (Tokyo).

For clarity, we begin the description of the narrative in the middle, where a lavishly dressed and richly bejewelled woman is dancing. To her left, a woman wearing a bun-like headgear plays a drum with both hands. To the right of the dancer, a man wearing a *dhotī* holds a cup or some sort of receptacle in the right hand and a vase or a pouch in the left (**fig. 17. B**). Turing the vase counter-clockwise, we see within an enclosure or railing a palm tree on whose leaves sits a large bird, perhaps a peacock (**fig. 17. C**).[82] Subsequently we see a lavishly dressed princely couple driving an elegant chariot pulled by two horses (**fig. 17. D**), not unlike two panels narrating the episode of the War of the Buddha's Relics on the western and southern *toranas* of Sāñcī Stūpa 1.[83] Compared to the two chariots on the already published goblet,[84] the present *biga* looks more realistic, with a chariot basket resting directly on the axle connecting the two eight-spoked wheels. The well-harnessed two horses are attached to a central pole. At the front and sides of the chariot basket is a semicircular guardrail offering some protection to the riders. The back of the chariot basket looks open, making it easy to mount and dismount. The charioteer is shown holding a stick or a goad (Gr. *kentron*). In continuous narrative, the same princely couple once again appears to the left of the chariot (**fig. 17. E**). The man makes a gesture with his raised right hand, while the left is positioned on the waist. The woman, wearing necklace, bangles, heavy earrings and elaborate headgear, holds an undraped *uttarīya* (shawl in present day Indian traditions) in her raised right hand.

This scene can be interpreted in two ways: the first, that the couple is engaged in a sprightly dance, or the second, that the woman is preparing to climb into the chariot by tightening her *uttarīya* around the hip. The left arm poised over the knot of the shawl may then be interpreted as about to tighten it up. The gesture the man makes may be an appeal to hurry up. We prefer this interpretation, looking at the way the princely couple is depicted in the chariot.

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[81] *Mahāvamsa*, ch. 17, 17.

[82] The tree looks more like a Talipot Palm (*Corypha umbraculifera*) whch grows throughout South and Southeast Asia. Historically, the leaves were written upon in various South and Southeast Asian cultures using an iron stylus to create palm-leaf manuscripts. On the present vase, the palm appears as a sacred tree, indicated by the *chatra* at the bottom. The tree within an enclosure is also a very popular theme on ancient Indian coins, particularly on contemporary Maurya-Sunga coins. See for example O. Bopearachchi & W. Pieper, 1998, p. 75, types 1-9; 22-27.

83 For the scene on the middle architrave of the back face of the western *torana*, see J. Marshall and A. Foucher, 1940, vol. II, pl. LX & pl. LXI. For the lower architrave of the back face of the southern *torana* see *ibidem*, vol. II, pl. XV.

[84] J.-F. Jarrige, 2006, fig. 1.A & 1.B.

We then see a procession of five persons (**figs. 17. F & G**). The first is most probably a blind man with long earlobes, wearing a *dhotī* and holding a long guiding stick in the right hand.[85] In front of him we see a woman clad in a simple garment and dancing, holding a small stick in each hand. Another woman walks in front of her to left, playing a harp.[86] The fourth figure is also a woman, as indicated by the well-pronounced breasts; she raises her right hand while the left holds the *uttarīya*. Her jewellery, rich garments and the dancing gestures remind us of the central figure described above (see **fig. 17. B**). The heavy incrustations over the fifth figure make it difficult to identify the gender. As in the second scene (**fig. 17. B**), this figure could be a man either dancing or singing. Below is a big tree in a railing, whose leaves' shape is not that of the Bodhi or peepal tree (*Ficus religiosa*). Three birds sit on its branches; the one on the top branch is certainly a peacock. It should be underlined here that the goblet is decorated with playful birds and quadrupeds such as elephants and stags, evoking an atmosphere of joy. The five figures described above (**figs. 17. F & G**) are relatively small compared to the five others, three of them already seen at the very beginning of our description (**fig. 17. B**). The first is a woman clapping hands or playing cymbals, and the next is a woman playing a barrel drum with both hands, after whom we return to the woman playing a single-face drum, who is ultimately followed by the lavishly dressed bejewelled female dancer (**fig. 17. B**).

We believe that the episodes depicted on this goblet or libation vase make no allusion to the episode where King Aśoka pays homage to the sacred Bodhi tree. However, they may have a relationship with the story of Kunala as narrated in the *Aśokāvadāna*. If we consider the blind man with the long stick as Prince Kunala, blinded by Tishyaraksha, the young sumptuously dressed dancing woman could be Kunala's wife Kanchanmala (**figs. 17. B & G**). The man wearing a *dhotī* -- shown twice with the dancing woman, once holding a cup (**fig. 17. B**) and again singing with stretched hands (**fig. 17. G**) -- may be Kunala himself as the wandering minstrel. The couple in the chariot could also be Kunala and his wife Kanchanmala, possibly leaving for Taxila to put down the rebellion. This interpretation is quite plausible, but we are very cautious about its conclusiveness as only further research on the other goblets from Baluchistan's Zhob valley, now dispersed all over the world, will help confirm or dispute our interpretation.

As we have seen, discs and goblets as well as the reliefs from Bharhut and the Sāñcī stūpas narrate stories in a very vivid way. This narrative force is the invisible thread binding every form of Indian art from the time of the Maurayans, through the Sungas, Kushans and Guptas, Pallavas and Cholas. It is neither Persian nor Greek, but Indian.

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[85] Observing the way the eyelids are rendered, J.-F. Jarrige (2006, p. 114, fig. 1. F.) correctly identified the man on his goblet as a blind person, having the same characteristics as the one we publish here.

[86] A similar type of a harpist is also depicted on the goblet published by J.-F. Jarrige (2006, p. 114, fig. 1. E.).

We saw that in ancient times the Indian satraps of the Persian Empire manifested their autonomy in multiple ways, for example in monetary policies by issuing their own coinage; thus artistic independence would not have been out of place. At the same time, it is true that ancient Indian art underwent drastic changes as the focus of inspiration changed from one horizon to the other. In many cases, even without precise textual evidence, coin types and artistic expressions show the effects of different cultures. India no doubt was inspired by Persia, but instead of reproducing stereotypical prototypes, it used outside inspiration to create new forms unique to the region. The study of Indian art demands a multi-disciplinary approach, wherein we can clearly trace the interactions between two cultures. Ultimately, this interaction gave birth to an extraordinary form of art which is neither western nor indigenous, but ***Indian***.

All the photographs are by the author except the figs. 17 by Ms. Anna Michalska

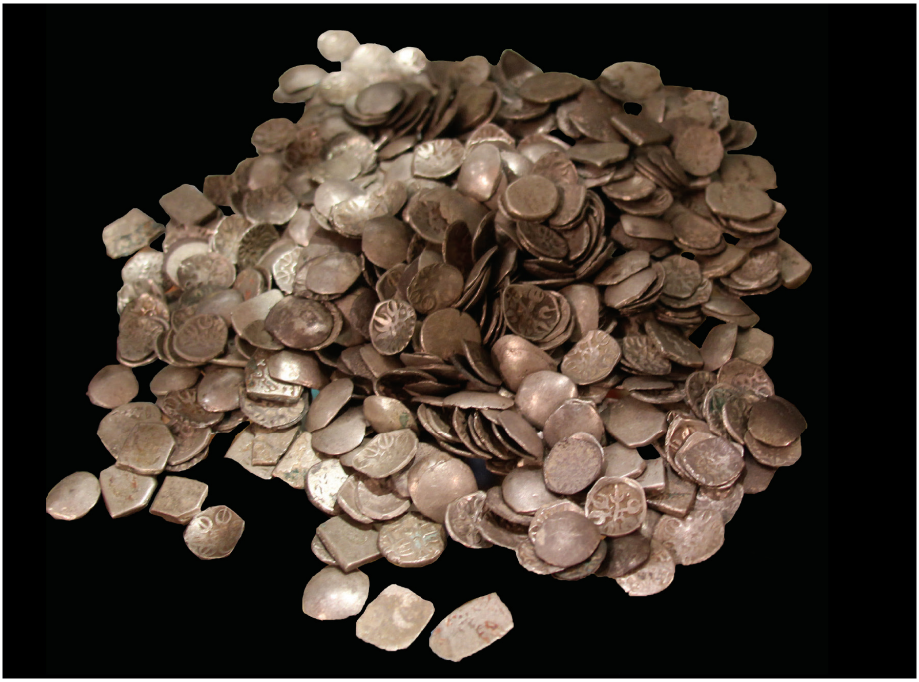

Figure. 1. Coins from the Shaikhan Dehri hoard now on the London antiquity market.

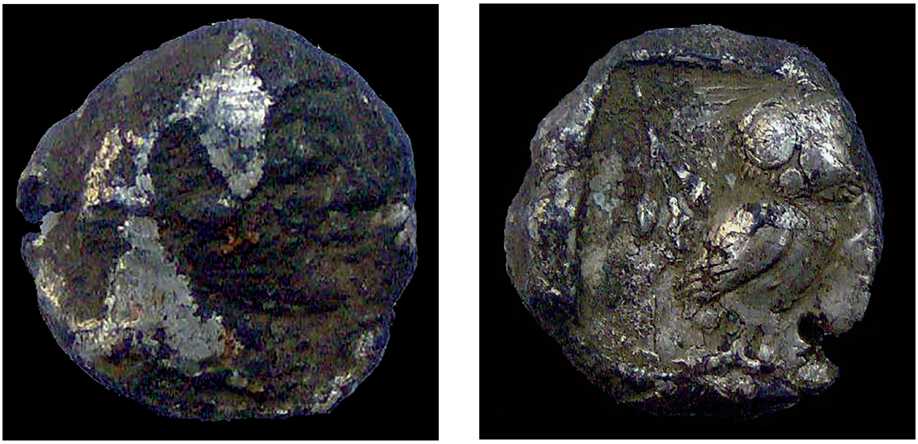

Figure. 2. A. Figure. 2. B.

Figs. 2. A & B. C. Obverse and the reverse of Tetradrachm of Attic weight of "Athenian owl" type from the Shaikhan Dehri hoard, 25 mm; 17.21 g.

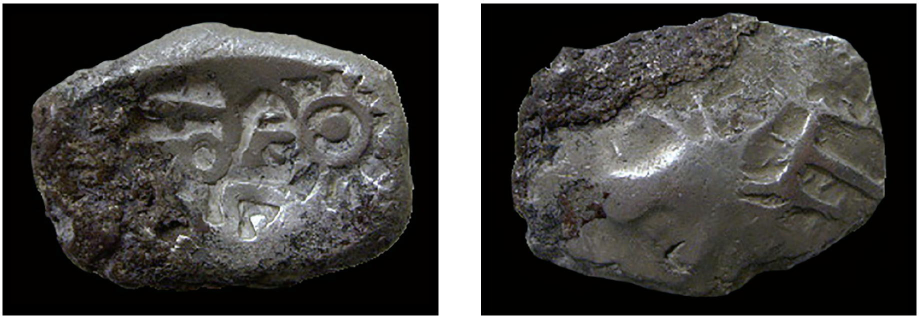

Figure. 3. A. Figure. 3. B.

Figs. 3. A & B. Concave and convex sides of the short ‘Bent Bar’ from the Shaikhan Dehri hoard, 24 mm; 10.44 g.

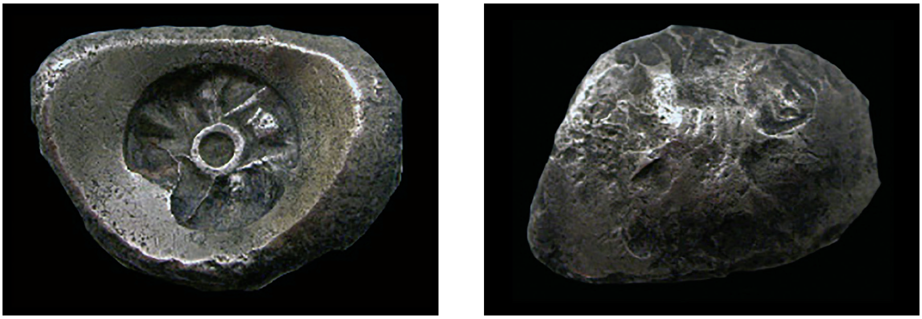

Figure. 4. A. Figure. 4. B.

Figs. 4. A & B. Concave and convex sides of the single-punched elongated coin from the Shaikhan Dehri hoard. 21 x 15 mm; 10.13 g.

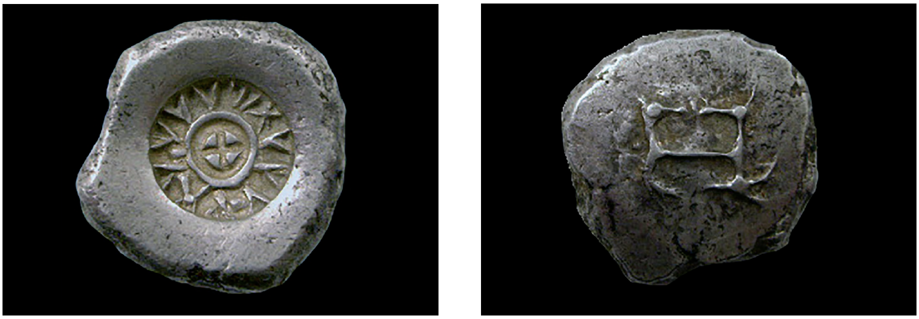

Figure. 5. A. Figure. 5. B.

Figs. 5. A & B. Concave and convex sides of the single-punched circular coin from the Shaikhan Dehri hoard. 19 x 18 mm; 10.11 g.

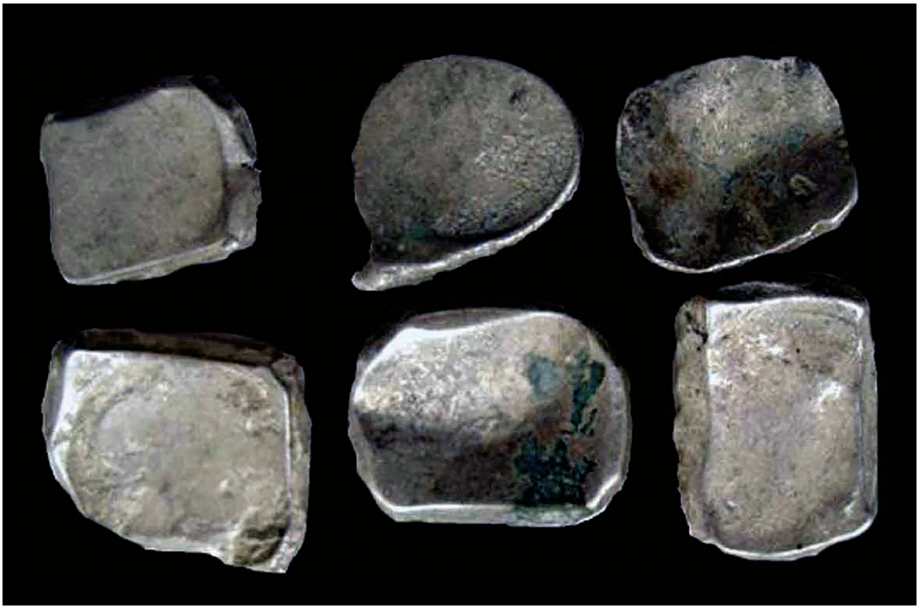

Figure. 6. Virgin flans from the Shaikhan Dehri hoard.

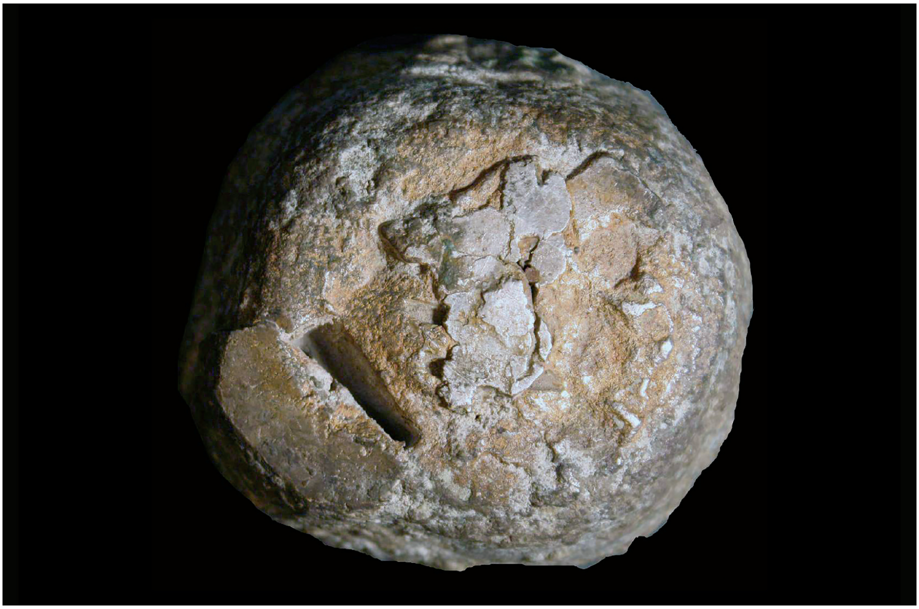

Figure. 7. Silver ingot from the Shaikhan Dehri hoard, ht. 8.5 wd. 6 mm; 398 g.

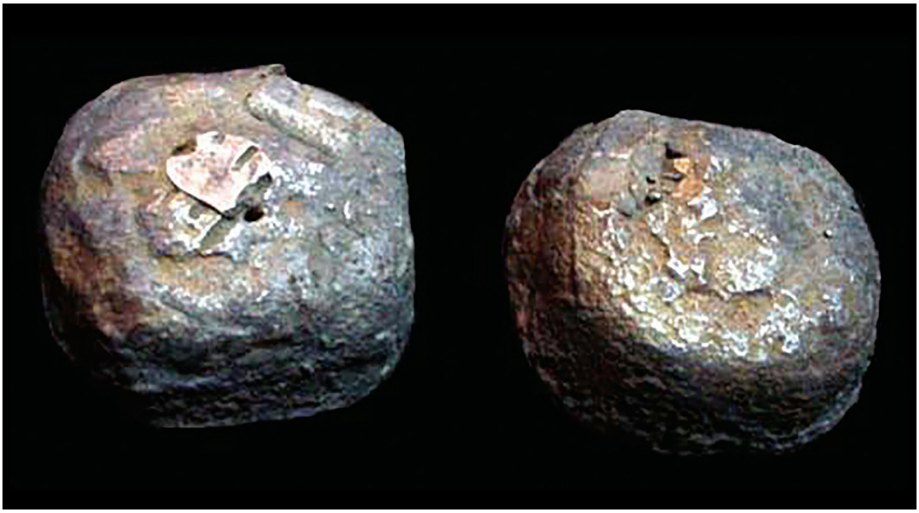

Figure. 8. Silver ingots from the Shaikhan Dehri hoard.

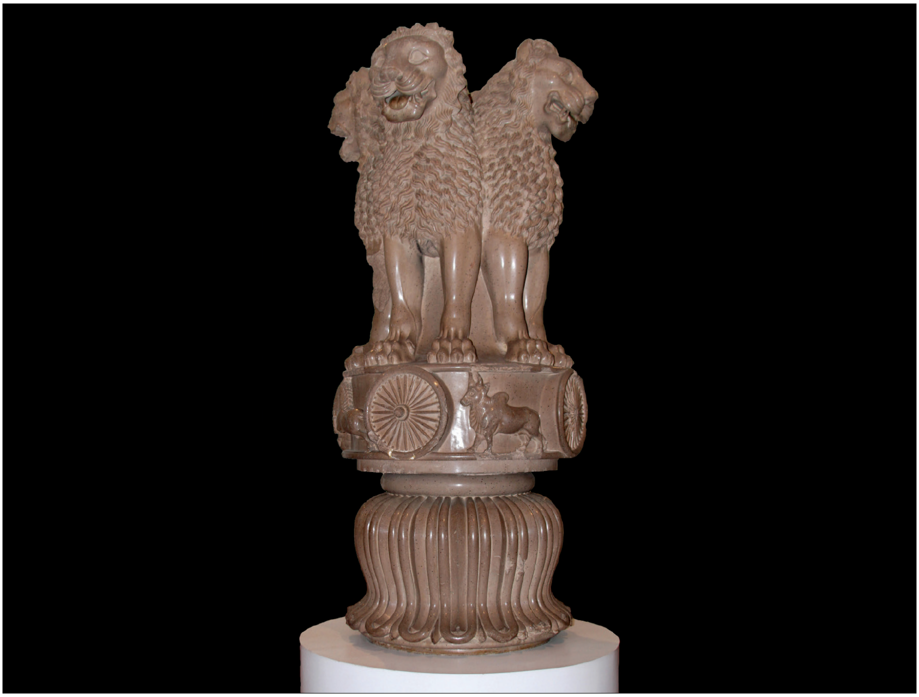

Figure. 9. Lion Capital from Sārnāth now in the Sārnāth Museum (with the kind courtesy of the ASI).

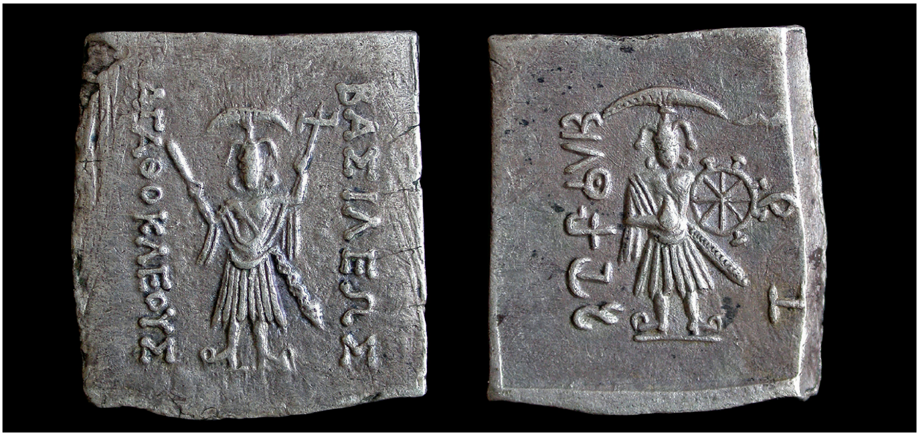

Figure. 10. Silver coin of Indo-Greek Agathocles depicting Saṃkarṣaṇa-Balarāma and Vāsudeva-Kṛṣṇa, R. Audouin & P. Bernard, 1974, pl. I, no. 3, 17 x 15 mm, 3. 42 g.

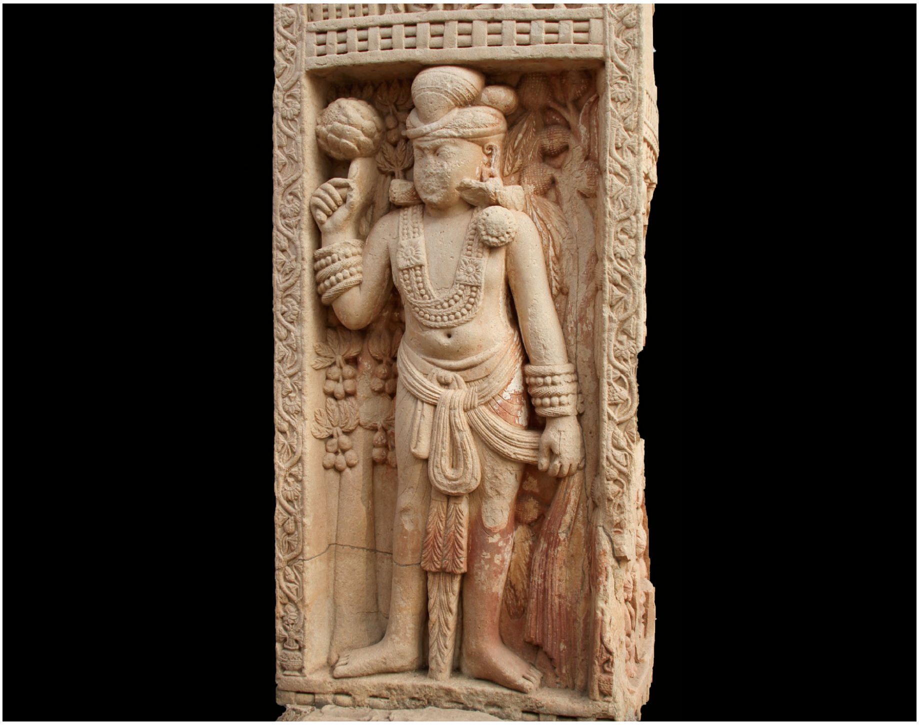

Figure. 11. Guardian genie of the Gate, Sāñcī stūpa 1, South pillar of the Eastern gateway, lower panel, J. Marshall and A. Foucher, 1940, vol. II, pl. LII (with the kind courtesy of the ASI).

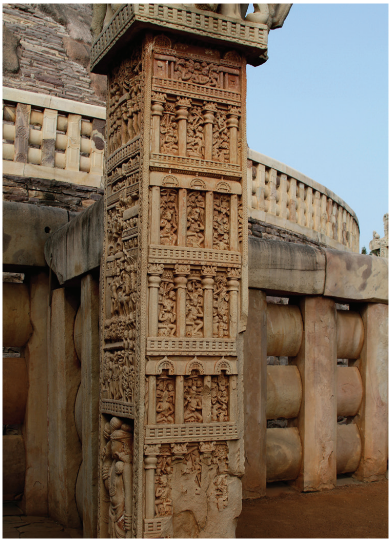

Figure. 12. A.

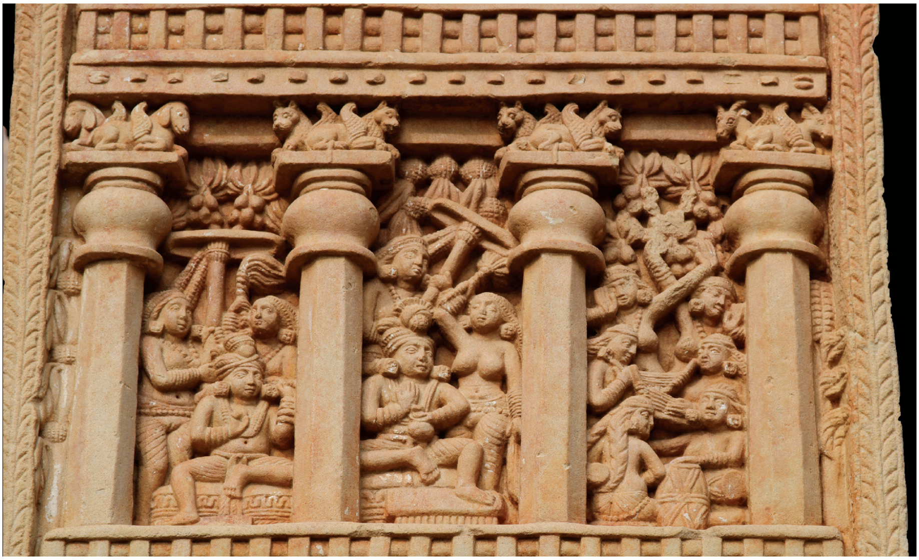

Figure. 12. B.

Figs. 12. A & B. Columns surmounted by a bell-shaped capital over which elephants, winged horses, goats or lions sitting back to back, Sāñcī stūpa no. 1, front of the North pillar of the Eastern gateway, J. Marshall and A. Foucher, 1940, vol. II, pl. XLIX (with the kind courtesy of the ASI).

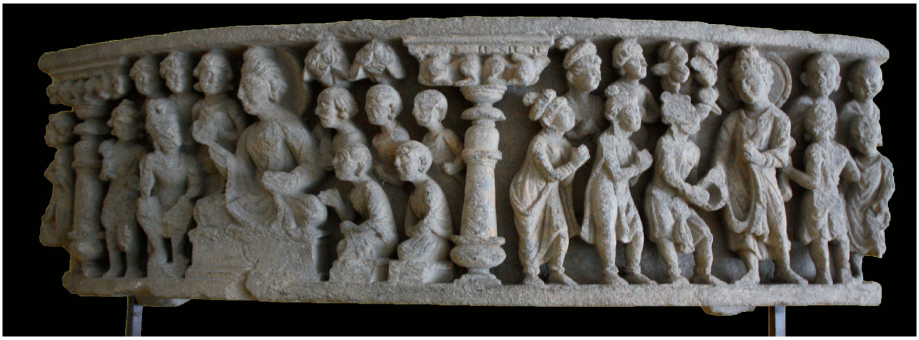

Figure. 13. A.

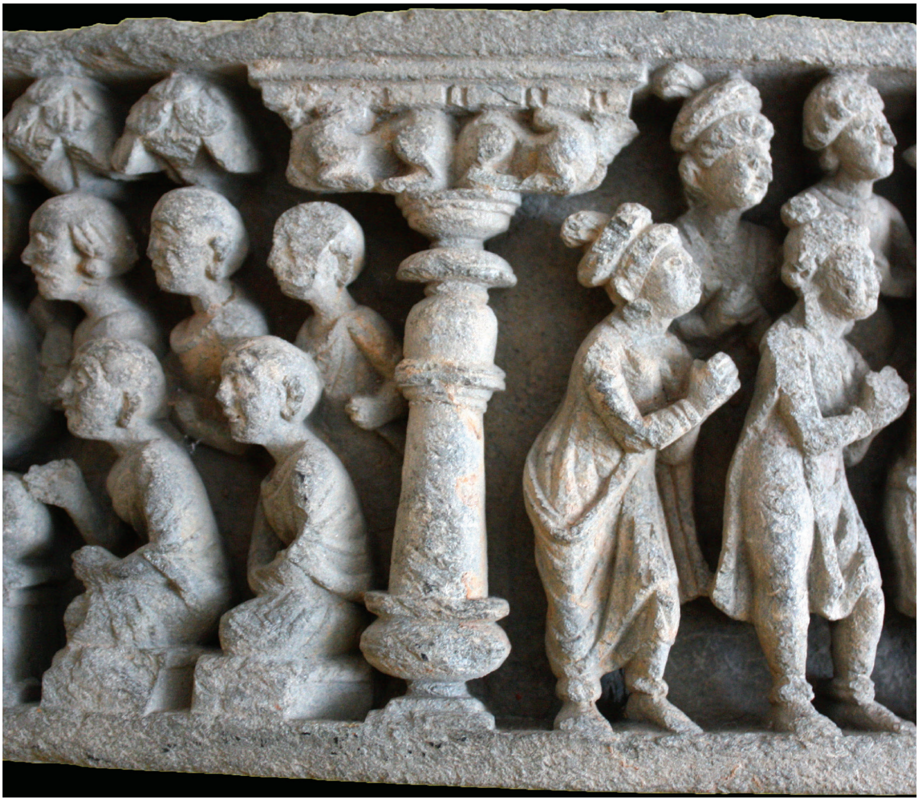

Figure. 13. B.

Figs. 13. A & B. Gandhāran relief from a private collection in Rio de Janeiro. Offering of handful of dust by Jaya and Vijaya to the Buddha (right) and the Buddha preaching (left).

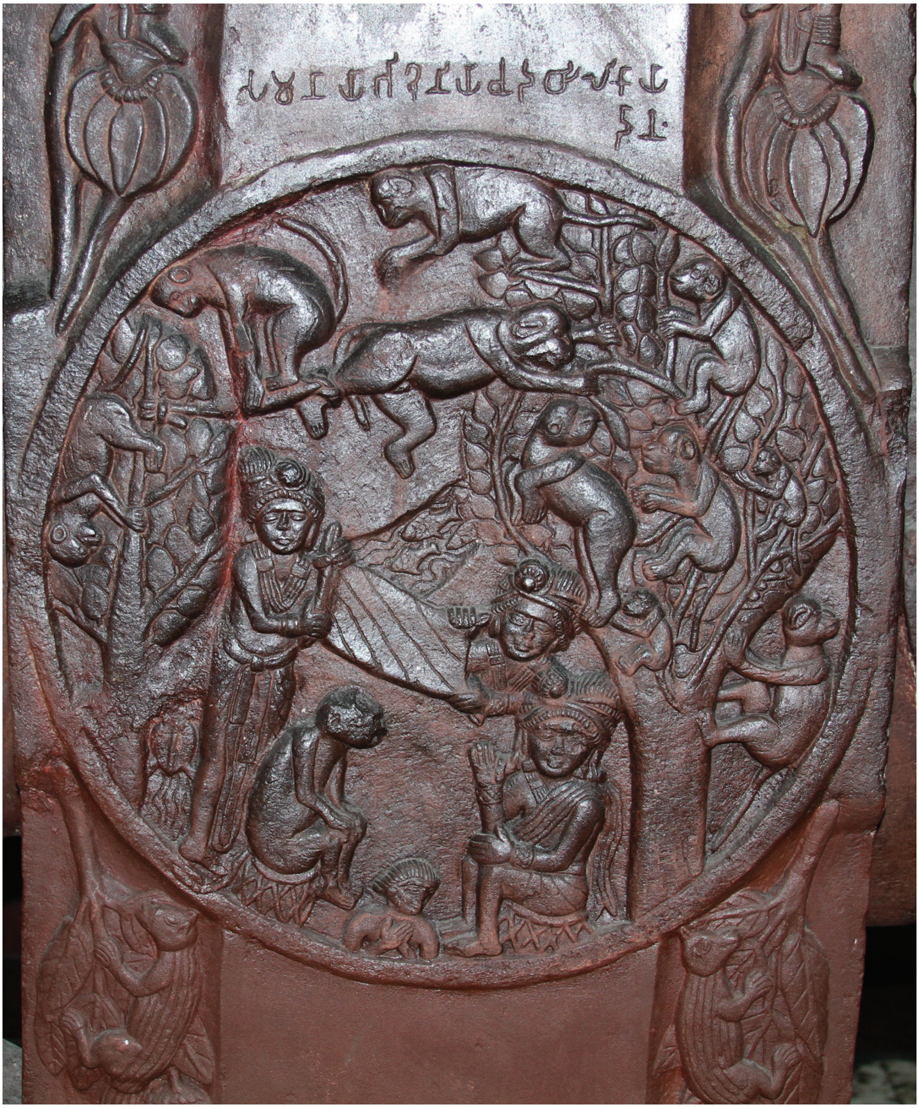

Figure. 14. Medallion from the Bharut stūpa depicting the Mahākapi jātka, Indian Museum of Calcutta (with the kind curtsey of the Director).

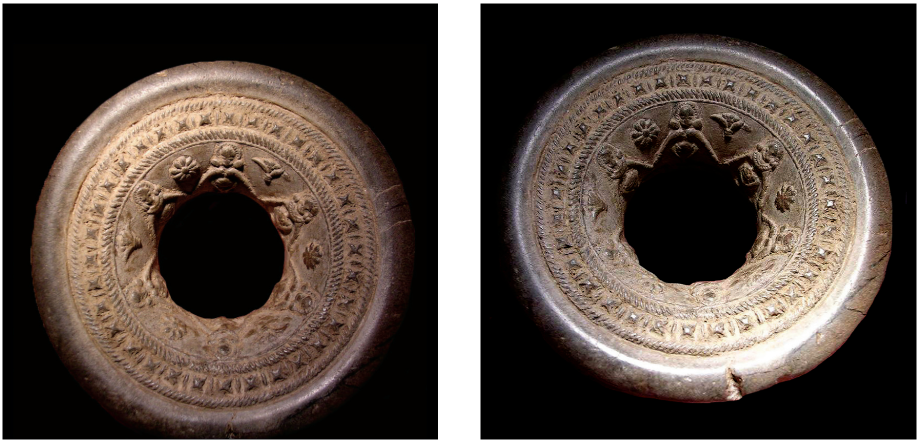

Figure. 15. Ring-stone from Pakistan, private collection in Lahore.

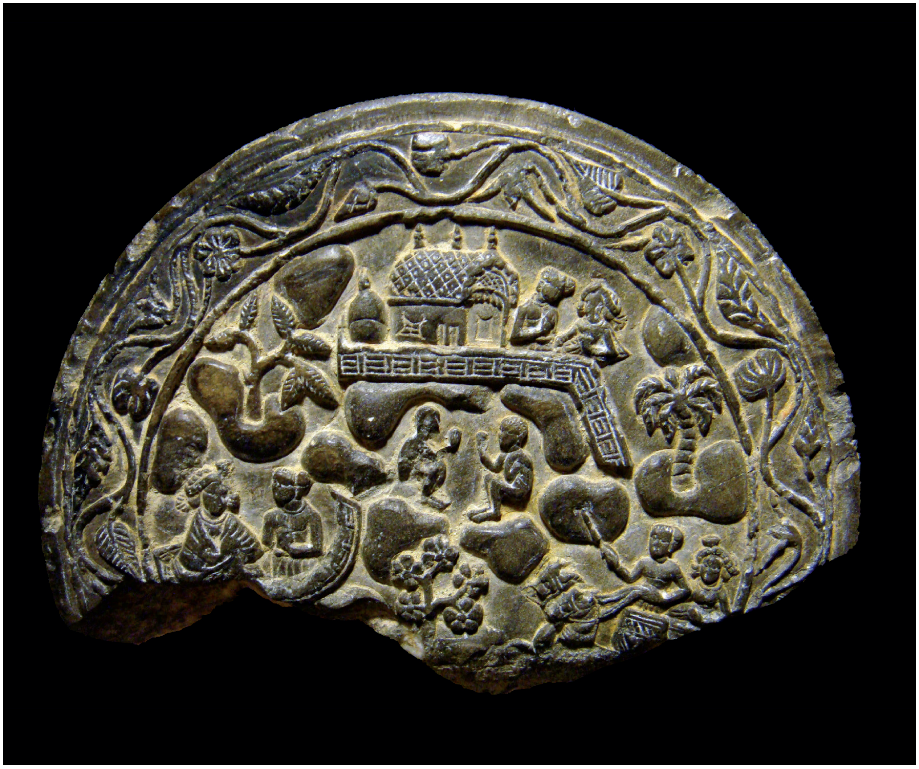

Figure. 16. Schist disc found in Pakistan probably depicting the story of Śakuntalā, private collection in Lahore.

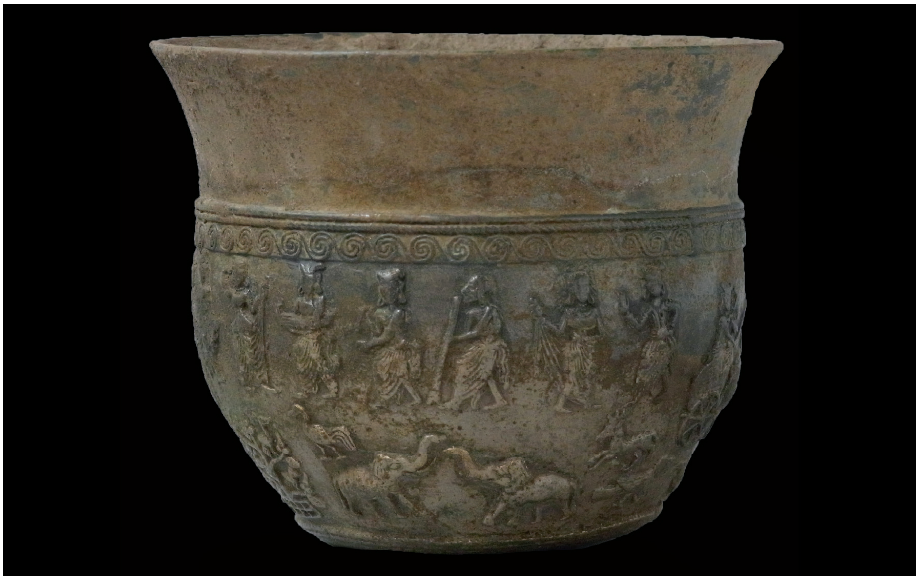

Figure. 17. A.

Figs. 17. A - I. Bronze goblets for libation (lota) from the Zhob valley in Baluchistan, ht. 9 cm, dimension 10.2 cm.

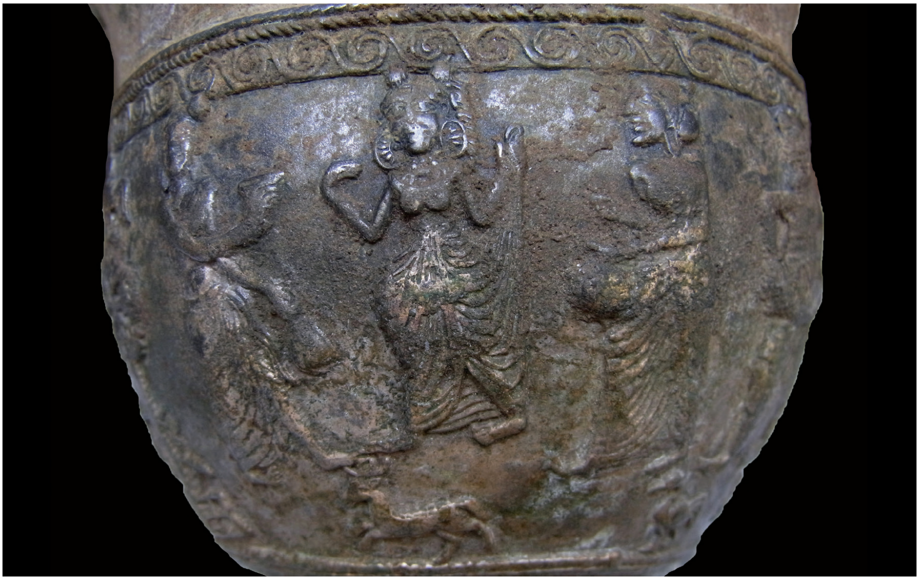

Figure. 17. B.

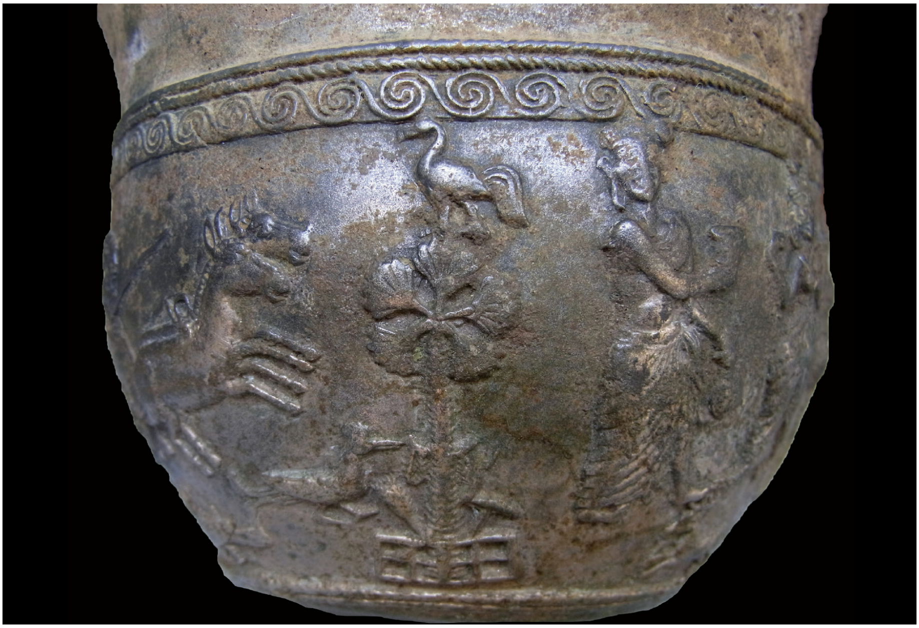

Figure. 17. C.

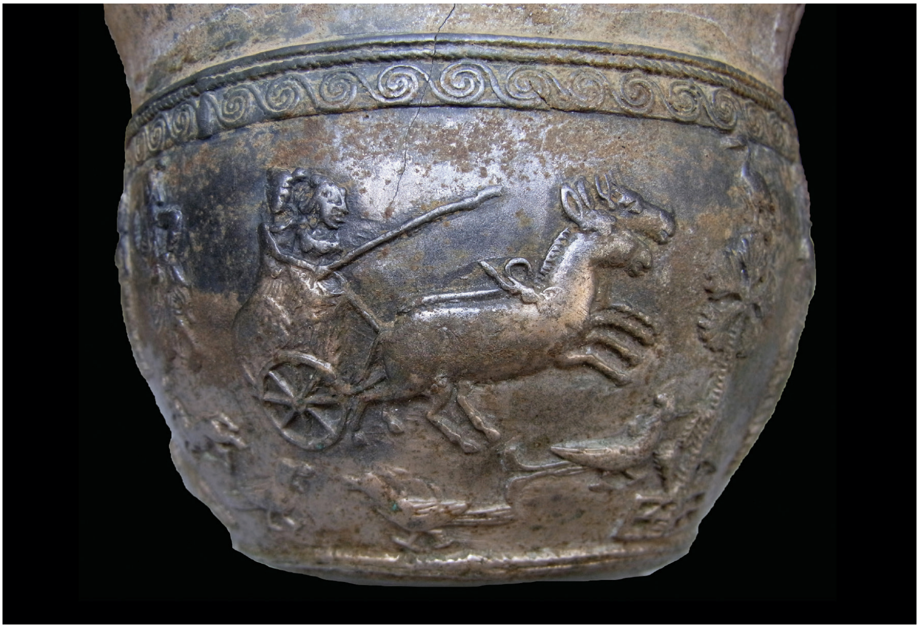

Figure. 17. D.

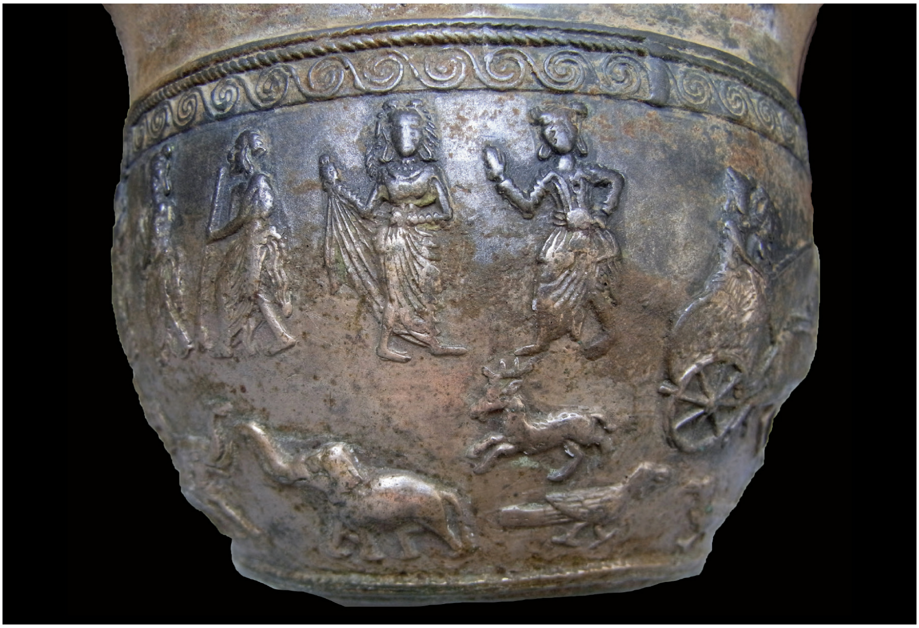

Figure. 17. E.

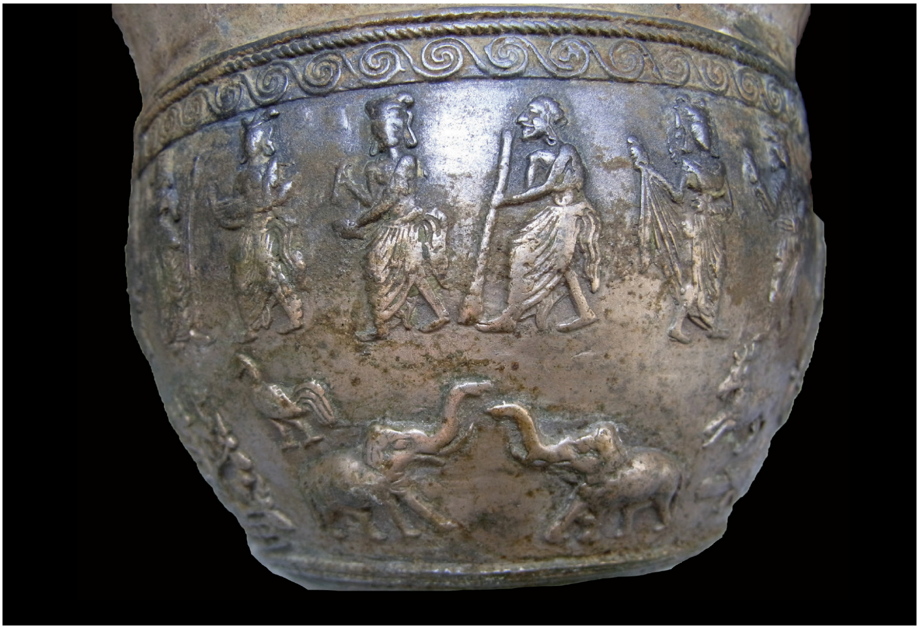

Figure. 17. F.

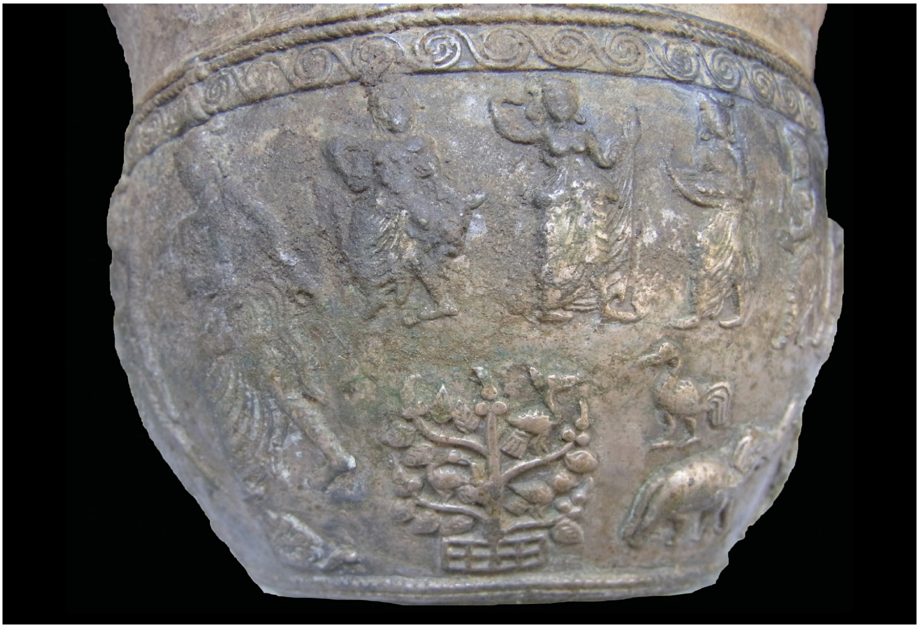

Figure. 17. G.

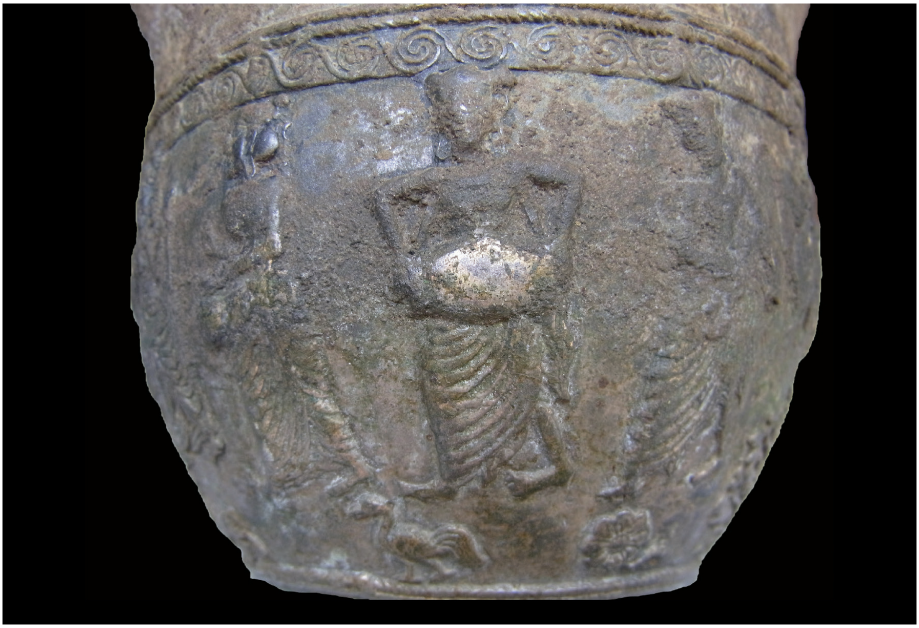

Figure. 17. H.

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NESTED HISTORIES: ALEXANDER IN IRAN AND INDIA

Grant Parker

Constantius

> My lord Constantius, who is better even than good emperors, I thought it particularly beneficial, both as an omen for you and as an incentive for future people, if I were to compose a *Persian Campaign*, a glorious account of emperors engaged in the same undertaking, but now already favorably undertaken and dispatched, namely of Alexander the Great and Trajan, acceded most willingly, desirous of the task, because indeed it demands that I wish it, and because the successes of rulers encourage others to match them.[1]

This is the elaborate dedication of Flavius Polemius' Latin treatise from the fourth century CE. The author thus addresses the Roman emperor, Constantius II, who ruled 337-361 CE, successor and son of Constantine, Rome's first Christian emperor. The treatise *Itinerary of Alexander* obliquely marks Constantius' upcoming Sassanian campaign by highlighting two illustrious predecessors, namely Alexander and Trajan, both of whom led expeditionary forces eastward from the Mediterranean. The work appears to be more a compact biography than an itinerary per se. In any case the *Itinerary* survives in part only, with the Trajanic narrative now missing. In what remains, the pragmatics of the text are already apparent from this beginning, and tellingly so. The author continues by mentioning that he is attracted by the 'close relationship between the respective enterprises', for it is Constantius' 'destiny to campaign in this theatre of war'. For all the distinction earned by Alexander and Trajan, Flavius Polemius would much prefer to focus on Constantius himself, for, as he says, 'you are now at the same age as the one, while you possess the strategic ability of the other, by which you stand to gain advantage over your own youth'. According to this version, Constantius has the best of both worlds: the vigor of youth and the experience of maturity. It should already be clear that the work needs to be understood in terms of the rhetorical practices of late antiquity, in which praise (*panegyrikos logos*) played a large part.[2]

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[1] Dextrum admodum sciens et omine tibi et magisterio futurorum, domine Constanti, bonis melior imperator, si orso feliciter iam accinctoque Persicam expeditionem itinerarium principium eodem opere gloriosum, Alexandri scilicet Magni Traianique, componerem, libens sane et laboris cum amore succubui, quod quidem meum velle enim id et exigit sui pensique est, quodque regentium prospera in partem subditos vocant.

The *Itinerary* has been dated to 340 CE, a time when Constantius was preparing for war against the Sasanian empire (Dodgeon and Lieu 1994:156-158; Lane Fox 1997). His father and predecessor Constantine had already prepared a military offensive against the Persians, and this was the situation Constantius inherited when he came to power in 337 CE. In fact, he would spend the years 338-350 CE based at Antioch, the better to oversee a defensive war against king Shapur I's incursions across the Tigris. At issue were Armenia – which Constantius ended up securing for Rome via diplomacy – as well as Mesopotamia. It was fairly recently, in 299 CE, that those two lands had been added to the Roman empire. Both of those territories were subject to rival claims on the part of the Sasanian state, as is evident from famous trilingual inscription from Naqsh-i Rustam, known as the *Res gestae* of Shapur (ca. 260 CE). The rhetoric and placing of the inscription underline the force of tradition in Sasanian claims of legitimacy: by erecting it at a building, the Kaʿba-yi Zardusht, supposedly dating from the Achaemenid period of his 'forefathers', Shapur makes pointed reference to both his royal genealogy and the geographical expanse of the Achaemenid conquests (discussed below).[3]

The quoted passage, and indeed the entire *Itinerary*, point to a larger phenomenon that demands exploration in these pages: Alexander as an imaginative bridge linking Iran and India. In this instance, there seems a paradox in the fact that a nearly seven-century retrospect is the basis for an essentially forward-looking text, but I shall try to show why this is no paradox at all. That the link resonates across historical time should already be apparent and will be important for the concluding analysis. This chapter draws mainly on Greek and Roman sources, even though this is only part of a much bigger story, indeed stories, of cross-cultural contact and historical memory (e.g. Ray and Potts 2007; Stoneman 2010); together those sources create an ideological framework. In examining that framework we shall move systematically back in time. In this essay on the *longue durée*, a high degree of map-mindedness will be important: it will emerge that the 'India' in question is substantially the Indus valley, in practice no more than the northwestern corner of the subcontinent. The context in which peninsular India comes into the discussion, as we shall see, is more an economic than a political or ideological one. But before we reach (and overshoot) Alexander himself it is necessary to consider another emperor for whom he provided an important precedent, in fact the historically earlier of the emperors linked to the *Itinerary*.

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[2] For another instance in which Alexander is compared in a context of praising Constantius, this time in a speech (Themistius, *Oration* 2), see Vanderspoel 1995:94. On the late Latin panegyrics (speeches in praise of emperors), see now Whitby 1998 and Rees 2012:3-48, 223-386. On historical problems around Flavius Polemius as the supposed author of this treatise, see Lenski 2002:187-188.

[3] See further Wiesehöfer 1996:154-155. The location, Naqsh-i Rustam not far from Persepolis, itself invoked the memory of the Achaemenids.

Trajan

Our second historical juncture is the penultimate year of Trajan's reign, namely 116 CE. After spending some seven years attending to the civilian aspects of the imperial office, Trajan had in 113 CE begun a large-scale campaign against the Parthians, triggered by events in the Roman client state of Armenia. Three years of campaigning brought successes in Mesopotamia, including Babylon and Ctesiphon. Finally, at the end of his eastern campaign, the 62-year-old emperor reached the Persian Gulf. As Dio Cassius narrates:

> He arrived at the ocean itself, and having found out about its nature and having caught sight of a ship setting sail for India, he said he would definitely have crossed over to the Indians were he still young. He began to contemplate the Indians and inquire into their affairs, and he deemed Alexander blessed. (68.29.1).[4]

This is an indulgent moment for the normally sober-minded Dio. It contains a note of a counter-factual history, by which Dio passingly invites readers to imagine how differently the course of history might have turned out if only …[5] The *locus classicus* for this phenomenon in classical literature is Livy's digression (*Ab urbe condita* 9.17-19), where he speculates how differently Mediterranean history might have evolved had Alexander turned his attentions westward rather than eastward[6] (on which, more below). In the event, Trajan never did live the dream, for in August 117 CE he would die at Selinus in Cilicia while travelling back to Rome from his campaign. When Hadrian came to power one of his first acts was to give up all Trajan's eastern conquests. However vague Dio's formulation, two fourth-century historians claim that Trajan did have considerable ambitions: Rufus Festus writes that Trajan, having secured the finest part of Persia, Seleucia, Ctesiphon and Babylonia, 'advanced as a far as the boundary of India, in Alexander's footsteps' (*Breuiarium* 20). His contemporary Eutropius says much the same thing, but without mentioning Alexander (8.3.2). Rufus Festus and Eutropius were both writing in 369-370 CE, at a time when the emperor Valens was contemplating an eastern expedition that would end with his death amid the catastrophic defeat at Adrianople in 378 CE (Lenski 2002:191-192). Such passages point to a pattern in which India comes into the purview of Rome's eastern campaigns of the imperial period, albeit more in an imagined than in a practical sense, too distant for conquest but too tempting to ignore.[7]

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[4] κἀντεῦθεν ἐπ᾽ αὐτὸν τὸν ὠκεανὸν ἐλθών, τήν τε φύσιν αὐτοῦ καταμαθὼν καὶ πλοῖόν τι ἐς Ἰνδίαν πλέον ἰδών, εἶπεν ὅτι 'πάντως ἂν καὶ ἐπὶ τοὺς Ἰνδούς, εἰ νέος ἔτι ἦν, ἐπεραιώθην.' Ἰνδούς τε γὰρ ἐνενόει, καὶ τὰ ἐκείνων πράγματα ἐπολυπραγμόνει, τόν τε Ἀλέξανδρον ἐμακάριζε.

[5] Counter-factual history, formerly dismissed as a parlor game, has recently experienced a revival: e.g. Tetlock et al. 2006. Perhaps unsurprisingly, most of the instances discussed by Tetlock and others turn on military encounters.

[6] quinam euentus Romanis rebus, si cum Alexandro foret bellatum, futurus fuerit.

Alexander

How does Alexander himself fit into the picture, now that we have adumbrated a broader context of cultural memory around him? It is as well to remember that the surviving sources were written so long after his campaign -- nearly three centuries in the case of Diodorus Siculus' *Library of History*, whereas Arrian and Plutarch are more than four centuries after the fact.[8] It was in the years 327-325 BCE that Alexander reached what is now Afghanistan and Pakistan, before changing course and eventually dying at Babylon in June 323 BCE at the age of 32.[9] The attendant problems for historical reconstruction are exacerbated by Alexander's attention to his public image during his own lifetime. Be that as it may, there is no need to recount here the encounter in 326 BCE with king Porus (Puru) at the Hydaspes (Jhelum) river in the Punjab, where the Porus' elephants are trumped by Alexander's tactics; nor the final showdown with his own troops at the river Hyphasis (Beas), where his general Coenus prevails on a grudging Alexander in the name of the troops, now exhausted and disaffected, to turn back from the pursuit of an ever vanishing horizon. Nonetheless, when Arrian recounts Alexander's speech at the Hyphasis, there is no mistaking the geography lesson, laced with a large dose of desire (*pothos*) for universal conquest, at the point where Alexander tries to persuade his men to press on:

> if anyone wishes to hear what will be the limit of the fighting, he should know that there remains no great expanse of land before us up to the river Ganges and the eastern sea. This sea ... will prove to be joined to the Hyrcanian Sea; for the great sea encircles all the land. And it will be for me to show both Macedonians and allies that the Arabian Sea forms a continuous stretch of water with the Persian Gulf, and the Hyrcanian Sea with the Arabian Sea. From the Persian Gulf our fleet shall sail round to Libya, as far as the Pillars of Heracles [i.e. Straits of Gibraltar]; from the Pillars all the interior of Libya then becomes ours, just as all of Asia is in fact becoming ours, and

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[7] Spencer (2006, 2009) sensitively examines Roman inflections of Alexander, relating them to their times. By contrast Gruen (1998) takes a skeptical view of Alexander's place in Roman politics, but he focuses on an earlier (late Republican) period of Roman history. For a recent survey of mythmaking around Alexander, see Ogden 2011.

[8] Overviews of the sources on Alexander typically make it clear that it is necessary to sift through a wide variety of evidence, of differing historical merit, and that the surviving literary sources demonstrate a considerable time-lag: e.g. Demandt 2009:1-32.

[9] Bosworth 1988:104-173, arguably still the standard account in English; among the constant stream of new books on Alexander, see especially Demandt 2009: chs. 9, 10, 12.

> the boundaries of our great empire here are becoming those which the god set for the entire continent. (*Anabasis* 5.26)[10]

Here is hyperbole not only at the rhetorical level, but also at the level of action. To continue the campaign is to aim for world conquest. By the same token, Alexander's conquest exceeded all precedent within a Greek context, and should more usefully be considered a performance of Achaemenid kingship. India was the ultimate object of that kingship, as the richest of the twenty satrapies and the 'jewel in the crown', as Disraeli would later describe the Raj. This brings us to the matter of Achaemenid precedent, which I believe goes a long way towards explaining Alexander's goals.[11]

Darius I

Though Cyrus the Great was instrumental in establishing of the empire, it was his successor Darius that added India to the realm in the penultimate decade of the sixth century BCE (Kuhrt 2007,189; Briant 2002, 107-114). This at least is a matter of inference from his Darius' Persepolis inscription H (DPh):

> Darius the Great King, king of kings, king of countries, son of Hystaspes, an Achaemenian. Saith Darius the King: This is the kingdom which I hold, from the Scythians who are beyond Sogdiana, thence unto Aethiopia; from Sind, thence unto Sardis -- which Ahuramazda the greatest of the gods bestowed upon me. May Ahuramazda protect me and my royal house.[12]

India thus seems to have become a satrapy or province in the years 518-513 BCE. Its status is underlined in Herodotus' *Histories*, where its role in the narrative of Persian power is linked with gold, and indeed the gold-digging ants that have troubled commentators ever since. In this first substantial, contextual reference to India in Greek sources, we see some of the elements that were to be fleshed out later: precious commodities, fanciful tales and their critique, several of them pointing in the direction of excess:

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[10] εἰ δέ τις καὶ αὐτῷ τῷ πολεμεῖν ποθεῖ ἀκοῦσαι ὅ τι περ ἔσται πέρας, μαθέτω ὅτι οὐ πολλὴ ἔτι ἡμῖν ἡ λοιπή ἐστιν ἔστε ἐπὶ ποταμόν τε Γάγγην καὶ τὴν ἑῴαν θάλασσαν: ταύτῃ δὲ, λέγω ὑμῖν, ξυναφὴς φανεῖται ἡ Ὑρκανία θάλασσα: ἐκπεριέρχεται γὰρ γῆν πέρι πᾶσαν ἡ μεγάλη θάλασσα. καὶ ἐγὼ ἐπιδείξω Μακεδόσι τε καὶ τοῖς ξυμμάχοις τὸν μὲν Ἰνδικὸν κόλπον ξύρρουν ὄντα τῷ Περσικῷ, τὴν δὲ Ὑρκανίαν θάλασσαν τῷ Ἰνδικῷ: ἀπὸ δὲ τοῦ Περσικοῦ εἰς Λιβύην περιπλευσθήσεται στόλῳ ἡμετέρῳ τὰ μέχρι Ἡρακλέους Στηλῶν: ἀπὸ δὲ Στηλῶν ἡ ἐντὸς Λιβύη πᾶσα ἡμετέρα γίγνεται καὶ ἡ Ἀσία δὴ οὕτω πᾶσα, καὶ ὅροι τῆς ταύτῃ ἀρχῆς οὕσπερ καὶ τῆς γῆς ὅρους ὁ θεὸς ἐποίησε.

[11] This line of argument has been influentially propounded by Briant, e.g. 2010.

[12] Dārayavauš XŠ vazraka XŠ XŠyanām dahyūvnām XŠ Vištāspahyā puça
Haxāmanišya Θātiy Dārayavauš XŠ ima xšaçam tya adam dārayāmiy
Hacā Sakaibiš tyaiy para Sugdam amata yātā ā Kūšā hacā Hidauv
Amata yātā ā Spardā tyamaiy Ahuramazdā frābara hay maΘišta
Bagānām mām Auramazdā pātuv utāmaiy viΘam (from Kent 1953, 136-7).

> The Indians, who are more numerous than any other nation we know, paid a tribute beyond that of every other people, namely 360 talents of gold dust. This was the twentieth satrapy. (Herodotus, *Histories* 3.94.2a)[13]

It is important that Herodotus be brought into the discussion, because his *History* is a reminder that the first Greek knowledge of 'India' is strongly mediated by the Achaemenids. Indeed the earliest Greek known to have visited India, Scylax of Caryanda, did so in an Iranian context; nor was Scylax unique in this respect (Parker 2008:11-33). Alexander may be an important figure in ancient history, but his India was no novelty, even within a Greek setting: it is clear from Old Persian documents, Herodotus' *Histories* and other sources that Alexander himself inherited an Achaemenid frame for conceptualizing and dealing with India (Parker 2008:11-63).

Implications

These remarks show some ways in which Alexander may be considered a conceptual bridge between Iran and India, even if that status requires some important qualifications, and even if that Alexander is a thing of historical memory more than a simple historical figure. In itself this hypothesis might seem simple and unproblematic, yet it is interesting to consider at least three further points that proceed from it.

(a) Most obviously we can conclude that individual rulers, Persian, Greek and Roman, took a military or strategic interest in India, and this had considerable ideological implications (Millar 1998). Levels of practicality are another matter entirely, as Dio Cassius poignantly comments with regard to Trajan. At the very least, we see here the power of precedent, *exemplum*, in Roman imperial politics, and particularly in the presentation or self-presentation of emperors.[14] Furthermore, it is useful to contrast different degrees of imperial control after hypothetical conquest: it is one thing to say who won the war, but who is it that won the peace? This is a question not only in ancient but also in contemporary military history.[15] For Constantius and Trajan, India remained a dream of military conquest; for Alexander it was a short-term military encounter with apparently no further thought or prospect of ongoing administration. In this respect the Achaemenid empire was different, in that administratively it did subsume the Indus valley as a satrapy or province. From a Greek or Roman perspective here is a demonstrable *longue durée* in the concept of India, mediated through an Iranian lens and then by Alexander, an image that becomes central to Roman imperial self-assertion. The durability of this theme of conquering India is all the more apparent if we recognize that in the Roman imperial period – and certainly the time of Trajan – that theme coincided directly with the trade in commodities between the Indian subcontinent and the Mediterranean (Tomber 2008; Sidebotham 2011; Parker 2007). This trade took place partly via the seaborne transport described in the *Periplus of the Erythraean Sea* from a few decades before Trajan's time (Casson 1989). Though that document is concerned with commercial seafaring at a very practical level, and has hardly any historical depth, it nonetheless participates in the cultural memory of Alexander, even if the details are left intriguingly vague: 'In these places [Barygaza] there remain even to the present time signs of the expedition of Alexander, such as ancient shrines, walls of forts and great wells' (section 41).[16] Whereas the seaborne or 'periplus' trade, enabled by mastery of the monsoons, involved the west coast of the subcontinent, Alexander's expedition was focused on the Indus valley. This difference deserves some emphasis, for the two different regions have been easily elided, from western perspectives, under the rubric of 'India'. Dio's comment about Trajan's wistful viewing of the trade ships is all the more significant in that it brings an unusually visible economic aspect to Roman imperial ideology. The low social status attached to trade in the Greek and Roman world has tended to mean that Greek and Latin literature offer few references to trade (Parker 2008:190). Dio has effectively conflated imperial ambitions and commercial practice.

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[13] Ἰνδῶν δὲ πλῆθός τε πολλῷ πλεῖστον ἐστὶ πάντων τῶν ἡμεῖς ἴδμεν ἀνθρώπων, καὶ φόρον ἀπαγίνεον πρὸς πάντας τοὺς ἄλλους ἑξήκοντα καὶ τριηκόσια τάλαντα ψήγματος: νομὸς εἰκοστὸς οὗτος.

[14] On the role of ancestral tradition and historical *exempla* in Roman culture more generally, see Van der Blom 2010: chapter 1.

[15] As Nicholas Purcell neatly puts it (1990:178): 'when a conqueror conquers, *what* does he conquer? What is the relationship between place and power?' (emphasis in original) Purcell is correct to suggest that the question is one of transhistorical significance; nonetheless, commonplace terminology of 'conquest' and 'empire' tends to obscure it. Day (2008) usefully surveys the ways in which 'societies overwhelm others'.

(b) The phrase 'history in the future tense' was used by W.H. Auden, in his poem 'Secondary epic', to describe the narrative intricacies of Virgil's *Aeneid.* Here the phrase helps us conceptualize a pointed conflation of historical moments, and suggests brief comparison with another episode in Roman history. This is the Parthian campaign of Lucius Verus, which took place 162-166 CE. As junior co-regent of the emperor Marcus Aurelius, Lucius was originally sent to quell a rising in Syria. He proceeded into Mesopotamia and gained military successes against the Parthians, which eventually brought him honorific titles and a triumph in the city of Rome. Unlike Trajan's campaigns, this was not about the addition of new provinces; rather, it resulted in only a modest extension of Roman territory. The entire campaign, it seems, was about teaching the Parthians a lesson, about keeping in check one of the two major hypothetical threats to Roman imperial power, the other being the Marcomanni on the Rhine-Danube frontier.

Lucian in his humorous treatise *How to write history* (section 31) complains that flattering historians have begun to write of Lucius Verus' Indian triumph even though he has only recently set out on campaign. Already a preface to an account of India, the *Indica*, is completed. Letters from the eastern front are already to hand, says Lucian; presumably they are comparable with the letters that are part of the *Alexander Romance* tradition, largely collections of marvelous phenomena.[17] Lucian's nightmare historian jumps the gun, having already undertaken to write an account of the circumnavigation of the outer Ocean. Lucian's India may be considered a hyperbolic construct, a place of the imagination; the fact that it happens to have a real existence is, strictly speaking, beside the point. In Lucian's text, historical writing is bad when it is temporally disjointed and informed by flattery.

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[16] Casson 1989, 200; Parker 2008, 315-318.

'History in the future tense' concerning Lucius Verus' campaign shares an important feature in common with Livy's counter-factual digression mentioned above (*Ab urbe condita* 9.17-19): the disruption of a grand narrative of Roman power. Whereas several historians, ancient and modern, have presented the rise of Rome as a grand narrative, a few telling moments such as these suggest to readers the hypothetical possibility that things might have been different, and at some level invite them to consider the overarching frame of Roman ascendancy in a different light. Livy begins his digression almost apologetically, as a rhetorical embellishment, supposedly offering both reader and author a little light relief (9.17.1). Livy answers his own question about a hypothetical showdown between Alexander and the Romans by arguing for the inevitability of a Roman victory, on the basis of three factors: the relative quality of soldiers, of commanders, and the predilection of *Fortuna* (9.17.4). The real comparison Livy develops in this unique passage is between Alexander as an individual and Rome as a collectivity (Morello 2002).

(c) Finally, we might say that the backwards parade of big men gives us a series of nested pasts. It is tempting, on this point, to consider Matryoshka dolls, a tradition that began in late nineteenth-century Russia, which graphically illustrates this principle. Naturally this should not be taken to suggest that one past completely encloses another; rather we are dealing with significant overlaps.[18] This is in the first instance a blurring of temporal boundaries, notably in the case of the *Itinerary of Alexander*, dedicated as it was to Constantius and with a view to his upcoming campaign. Lucian's *How to write history* exhibits the same phenomenon. Many have pointed out that empires frequently make sense of themselves by invoking previous empires as frames of reference (Alcock et al. 2001). Such analyses are essentially temporal in their aspect, but here in the case of Alexander's expedition we are dealing with the blurring of geographical boundaries. This spatial blurring can, in a Roman context, be considered in relation to rhetoric, particularly display rhetoric (*epideixis*). A comparable phenomenon may be visible in the Achaemenid monuments and inscriptions, with their emphasis on the ruler's personal achievements and power. This tradition is itself resonant in an Iranian context, as we have seen with the *Res gestae* of Shapur I.

In all of this there is clearly nothing simple about Alexander as a historical figure; much more, he is a rich figure of historical memory. Just as later tradition, especially fictional, created someone who was larger than life, it is not surprising that the geography of his expedition was subject to elaboration among the historians. When the *Alexander Romance* tradition takes the conqueror to the moon or to the bottom of the sea as a prototype of Jacques Cousteau;[19] the historical accounts are much more modest in magnifying the eastern extent of the campaign. The 'India' of the Alexander historians, which on the map are today's Afghanistan and Pakistan, is presented as a coda to the mighty Persian empire. Though this may have decreased the likelihood of military conquest on the part of the Roman empire, its place in the imagination was only enlarged.

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[17] Arthur-Montagne forthcoming.

[18] An alternative metaphor for the phenomenon might be that of the echo chamber, with which J.M. Coetzee characterizes early histories of the Cape of Good Hope (Coetzee 1988).

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[19] On the *Alexander Romance* tradition, with its abundant supernatural phenomena, see esp. Stoneman (2010).

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THE WHITE ELEPHANT:
NOTIONS OF KINGSHIP AND ZOROASTRIAN DEMONOLOGY

Touraj Daryaee
Soodabeh Malekzadeh

On July 1, 802 CE, amidst huge fanfare a white elephant arrived in Aachen, the seat of Charlemagne's power. This was the most opulent gift sent by Harun al-Rashid from Baghdad to the king of the Franks. Certainly this was an interesting and symbolic gift whose meaning may have been missed to our Frankish king, unless as Einhard's *Vita Karoli Magni* is accurate in stating that Charlemagne himself had requested the fabulous beast. Still, in the twenty first century the gift of a white elephant was interesting enough that the city of Aachen staged an exhibit entitled "Ex oriente: Isaak und der weise Elefant," which chronicles the career of the Jewish ambassador of Charlemagne who had brought the elephant back from the East.[1]

More interesting for us is that the *Vita Karoli Magni* calls Harun a *rege Persarum* "King of the Persians."[2] Perhaps what a white elephant meant to Harun was the extension of what Charlemagne had desired symbolically, that is the notion of royalty acknowledged from afar. From our modern academic view Harun al-Rashid is seen as an Arab caliph, while for others he exhibits all the signs of a worldly ruler from the East, whose "Persianess," not literally of course, but culturally is evident. Neither the collection of Sasanian tales of *Hazār Afsān* (1000 Tales from Middle Persian) during his caliphate,[3] nor his rule from Baghdad, less than a century when Ctesiphon was the center of the Sasanian Persian Empire is of concern here.

But more importantly, Harun was born in 776 CE in the city of Rayy and ruled from

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[1] Ex oriente - Isaak und der weiße Elefant
www.muenster.org/autorengruppe/Elefant.html

[2] Legends of Charlemagne: The life of Emperor Charles.
www.celtic-twilight.com/charlemagne/einhard/einhard_charlemagne_c16.htm

[3] Beyzaei 2012.

Baghdad and died in Khurasan, at what is today known as Haruniyya. Harun revisited Rayy many more times and had an attachment to his birthplace. In the cultural milieu of Rayy, however, one can more safely state that the notion of a "white elephant" (we are not sure if it was indeed white or not), certainly was understood as a sign of royalty.[4] (Figure 1)

The clearest evidence for the symbolic relevance of the elephant in the Sasanian Empire and late ancient Iran, appears in Middle Persian *Kārnāmag ī Ardaxšīr ī Pābagān* (Vitae of Ardashīr, son of Pābag), a story about the founder of the Sasanian dynasty, Ardashīr I. Frantz Grenet the latest editor and translator of the text suggested the *Kārnāmag ī Ardaxšīr ī Pābagān* was not put to its final form before 706 CE, and that it was the reading staple of the Muslim elite at the time.[5] Thus, the text was last put to writing only about half a century before Harun's time. In this best-known Middle Persian text that every student who has studied Middle Persian has to have read parts of it, there is the episode of the three dreams of Pāpag, the local ruler of Fārs or Persis, where on the second night such a dream was made manifest *(Karnamg I.9):*

> *any šab-ēw ēdōn dīd čiyōn ka sāsān pad pīl-ēw ārāstag ī spēd nišāst*
> *estād ud har kē andar kišwar pērāmōn ī sāsān estēnd ud namāz*
> *awiš barēnd ud stāyišn ud āfrīn hamāg kunēnd*
>
> Another night he saw in this manner that Sāsān is sitting on an adorned
> white elephant and everyone in the country are standing around him
> and all are saluting him and worshiping and praising him.

Pāpag asks his dream interpreters to decode the meaning of this dream *(Kārnāmag I.13*):

> xwamn-wizārān guft kū ān kē ēn xwamn pad-iš dīd ōy ayāb az frazandān ī ān
> mard kas-ēw ō pādixšāyīh ī gēhān rasēd čē xwaršēd ud pīl ī spēd ī ārāstag
> čērīh ud tuwānīgīh (ud) pērōzīh...
>
> The dream interpreters said that that person whom you saw in these dreams,
> either he or from the offspring of that man, someone will become the
> king of the world, since sun and a white adorned elephant (symbolizes) bravery
> and power and victory...

Thus, in this context it is clear that a white elephant has a significant symbolism, meaning "(regal) power" in the Iranian world, something that cannot have been lost to Harun either.[6] In another Middle Persian text on the history of chess and backgammon, *Abar Wīzārišn ī Čatrang ud Nihišn Nēw-Ardaxšīr* (On the Explanation of Chess and

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[4] Treptow & Whitcomb 2007, p. 29.

[5] Grenet 2003, p. 26.

[6] For Elephants in the Sasanian Army see, Charles 1998.

Backgammon), this time the Indian king, Dēwšarm sends the following gifts to the Sasanian king, Khusro I with elephants[7] (WČ 2):

> *abāg ān čatrang 1000 ud 200 uštar bār zarr ud asēm ud gōhr ud*
> *morwārīd ud jām 90 ud pīl u-š čiš ī mādagīg kard abāg frēstīd...*
>
> Along with that (game of) chess he sent 1200 camel loads of gold
> and silver and jewels and pearls and goblets and 90 elephants and
> things specially made for them, where were sent along..."[8]

Finally, in another late Middle Persian poem entitled *Abar Madan ī Wahrām ī Warzāwand* (On the Coming of Wahrām ī the Miraculous), the text states the savior, Wahrām ī Warzāwand will come from India in the following manner:

> *ka bawād ka payg-ē āyēd hindūgān*
> *kū mad ān šāh-wahrām az dudag ī kayān*
> *kū pīl hast hazār abar sarān sar hast pīlbān*
> *kū ārāstag drafš dārēd pad ēwēn ī husrawān*
>
> When will it be when a messenger comes from India,
> (to say) that King Wahrām from the lineage of Kayanids has arrived,
> That there are a thousand elephants, over their heads are elephant-drivers,
> That has an adorned flag in the manner of the renowned kings.[9]

The historical sources provide interesting references to the white elephant and elephants in general for the Iranian world. The most interesting is in regard to the most opulent of the Sasanian rulers, Khusro II (Parwēz). Masʿudī states that the king kept 1000 white elephants,[10] no doubt suggesting the immensity of the king's greatness. One need not mention the large number of use of elephants by the Sasanians as mentioned in Armenian, Roman, Arab and Persian sources. We know that the Sasanians used them practically for engineering duties as well as siege warfare both against the Romans and the Muslims.[11] So, it is clear that all the stories and traditions from this period suggest that elephants were used and the white elephant is a symbol of royalty, especially if a king sits on one!

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[7] For elephant iconography in chess pieces see Tagliatesta 2015, p. 345.

[8] Daryaee, 2016, p. 18.

[9] Daryaee, 2012, pp. 10-11.

[10] Morūj, ed. Pellat, I, p. 321, see, De Blois 1998.

[11] Daryaee 2016.

India: White Elephant and the Theme of Royalty

We also know that the white elephant as a symbol of kingship existed early on in Nepal, Burma and India. The Sanskrit text, *Mātanga-Līlā* "Elephant-Sport," also provides a classification of elephants based on color, where the "white" exist "in the heavenly world," and that the light-colored (spotted) ones are auspicious signs.[12] One manifestation of such notions is the appearance of Indra, the king of the gods, being shown riding a white elephant.[13]

From Where to Iran?

If one looks at the Zoroastrian texts, the world of animals like other creatures and beings are divided into the benevolent and malevolent sphere.[14] Beside the appearance of the word (*Pīru* in Old Persian), elephants are classified as a demonic creature. In the *Bundahišn* (The Book of Primal Creation), that the elephant is part of the demonic world. Since elephants are not native to Iran, as a foreign beast and because of their unfamiliar appearance it is surmised that they were considered evil.[15] However, just like lions which are also part of the demonic creatures of the Zoroastrian world, the elephant is considered as part of the wolf species.[16] But because their association with royalty and since the kings kept and used them, they were tolerated.[17] This becomes specifically the case for elephants as well when we consider specific passages in Zoroastrian Middle Persian texts.

In the *Dādestān ī Mēnōg ī Xrad,* there is a specific passage where the Indo-Iranian Yima/Yama, that is the culture hero of Iran in the *Shahnameh* is praised because (DMX Question 26, Chap. 27):

> *čahārom kū-š gōspand pad gōhrīg ī pīl ō dēwān nē dād*
>
> "The fourth advantage from him (i.e., Jam) was this, that he
> did not give sheep to the demons in exchange for elephants."[18]

A more interesting anti-elephant passage appears in PRADD which is in regard to Yima/Jam (31b, 2-3):

> *zarduxšt ēn-iz pursīd az ohrmazd ku jam pad gēhān nēkīh čē weh kard:*
> *ohrmazd guft kū ān ī ka dēwān be ō mardōmān guft kū gōspand be ōzanēd*

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[12] Edgerton, 1985, p. 11.

[13] Zimmer, 1976, p. 35.

[14] Schmidt, 1980, pp. 209-244.

[15] Root, 2002, pp. 198-201, See Moazami 2005.

[16] Moazami, 2005, pp. 312-313.

[17] Root, 2002, pp. 198-201

[18] Tafazzoli 1975, pp. 395.

> *tā-tān amā pīl dahēm ī sūdōmand kē-š dāstār ud pānag nē abāyēd. Mardōmān guft kū nē pad dastwarīh ī jam be kunēm u-šān kard ud jam pad nē ōzadan ī mardōmān gōspand ud pad nē stad<an> ī mardōmān az dēwān pīl abāg dēwān ēdōn pahikārd kū-š dēw be ēraxt hēnd u-š margōmarnd ud pādifrāhōmand kard hēnd*
>
> "Zoroaster asked this also of Ohrmazd: "What did Jam do best for the good of the world?" Ohrmazd said: 'That which was when the demons said to men: "Kill the beneficent animal, so that we may give you the elephant, which is advantageous (in that) neither keeper nor herdsman are required for it." 'Men replied: "Let us act without the permission of Jam," and they did; and so Jam battled with the demons for men not to kill the beneficent animal, and for men not to take the elephant from the demons, that is, he fought the demons and they were made mortal and punishable."[19]

So, we do indeed find an interesting duality in Middle Persian sources, where the demonic nature of the beast is clearly rooted in the Zoroastrian tradition and its encounter with the elephant. In the *Shahnameh*, we also have an episode where the young Rustam, the great hero of the epic, slays a white elephant who had gone wild; and in Persian literature and poetry, elephant's wily and evil nature is abundantly clear.[20] This evidence should persuade us that elephants are viewed negatively.

However, in the *Kārnāmag ī Ardaxšīr ī Pābagān* the elephants appear to have an important symbolism which matches the Indian and East Asian world-view. Although Tafazzoli believes that the Iranians took to the animal by the Sasanian period,[21] one can surmise that indeed it is only in late antiquity that the notion of royalty and elephants came to Iran. Hence in the elephants became symbols of royalty in the Iranian tradition via India and the Indian ideas of regality.

But the question is when did this notion enter the Iranian world? There are a few possibilities. If we take only the Indo-Iranian contacts via the literary tradition, 6th century CE is a good period to point to.[22] The story of Burzōe, the famous Sasanian envoy and doctor being sent to India to bring back knowledge and of course a number of texts is well-known.[23] But one can suggest other more complicated and earlier avenues of transmission. For more clues, we have to go back to earlier history and view the presence of the elephants in the Iranian world before the coming of the Sasanians.

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[19] Williams 1990, pp. 57-58, p. 137.

[20] Taffazoli 1975, p. 396.

[21] Taffazoli 1975, p. 397.

[22] For information on iconographic remnants of the Indian Elephant see Tagliatesta 2015, p. 337.

[23] For the analysis of the tale see De Blois, 1990.

From Achaemenids to the Seleucids:

We know that the Achaemenids used elephants in their army, no doubt as a result of Darius' venture into India. According to Arrian at Gaugamela, Darius III used 15 elephants in battle against the Greco-Macedonian forces, but did not sit on one! With Alexander and the Seleucids, elephants are used in Central Asia and appear on coinage as well. Alexander is shown on a silver coin battling Porrus, as the Indian king is sitting on an elephant, no doubt a symbol of royalty! But more importantly is the series of coinage discovered and published by O. Boperachchi, where the scene of Greco-Macedonian and Indian king are portrayed in frames.[24] (Figure 2) It should also be mentioned that the Seleucids did mint coins with images of elephants at Susa in silver stater. They also minted such coins in Mesopotamia at the mint of Seleucia on the Tigris in bronze denomination.[25]

The most interesting coin with an elephant is that of Ptolemy I from Egypt (305-283 BCE), where on the Obv. Alexander is present in an elephant scalp.[26] (Figure 3) But the meaning of this portrait is unclear, as if it may represent notion of successorship to Alexander than idea of kingship. But one may state that by the time of the Greco-Bactrian kingdom onward the notion of elephant, namely a white elephant and kingship would have been understood and adopted by the Greek rulers. As early as Demetrius I, between 200-180 BCE the elephant scalp is seen again, but that is somewhat different from sitting on one. (Figure 4)

The Parthians:

Our sources for the Parthian period is meager and even more so with regards to elephants.[27] But we believe the connection and idea of elephants as symbols of royalty in the KAP may be the result of the Parthian heritage and the continuation of that tradition. The way this idea would have passed is as follows. In 138 or 136 BCE, Mithradates I defeated the Greco-Bactrian ruler, Eucratide. On the coin, Mithradates I is shown with and elephant on the reverse with the title of the "Great King, Arsaces," in commemoration of his conquest. It is at the same time that for the first time we see elephants struck on Parthian coinage on eastern mints, no doubt symbolizing the sovereignty over Bactria. (Figure 5)

It is in the Parthian period that we get both representational and literary evidence of the idea that the notion of elephants and sitting on one clearly symbolizes kingship and royalty in the Iranian world. This takes us to the first century CE and the connection between the Armenian and the Iranian world.

The Battle of Rhandeia in 62 CE is important for Armenian, but also Partho-Roman history. The Roman general, Paetus had taken over the Armenian command and wanted to place Armenia under direct Roman rule. His forces in the valley of Arsanias or Murad

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[24] Bopearachchi, & Flandrin. 2005.

[25] Troncoso 2013, pp. 260-261.

[26] Errington & Sarkosh Curtis. 2007, p. 35

[27] De Blois, 1998.

Su were repeatedly placed under siege and defeated. Before Corbulo was able to bring help from Syria, Paetus made an ignanomous treaty with the Parthian King of Kings, Vologeses (Walāxš), agreeing to evacuate Armenia. The Romans agreed to build a bridge across the River Arsania (Murad Su) for the Arsacids before their departure.[28] Tacitus, our main source for this event provides some very interesting details on the mode of humiliation and presentation of Parthian power over the Romans. He states that Paetus and the Romans built the bridge because "Meanwhile Pætus threw a bridge over the river Arsanias, which flowed by the camp, apparently with the view of facilitating his march. It was the Parthians, however, who had required this, as an evidence of their victory; for the bridge was of use to them, while our men went a different way."[29] Furthermore, the Roman forces were made to march under a "yoke," which was part of the Roman cultural understanding of subjugation. While the Romans were on the march the Armenians took some of them as slaves and even took the clothes off their backs for to further humiliate them. But what symbolically made the event momentous was the king of king's march over the bridge in the following manner:

> "Seated himself on an elephant, he (Vologeses) crossed the river Arsanias,
> while those next to his person rushed through it at the utmost speed
> of their horses..."[30]

No doubt the king of kings sitting on an elephant in Armenia had huge symbolic meaning for the Parthians by now, one of them being their mastery over Armenia. This, we believe is in line with our early Sasanian tradition as reflected in the late KAP. One can suggest that indeed the Sasanians took on the tradition inherited from India via the Greco-Bactrian and subsequently Parthian world, where the relation between elephant and kingship is manifest. The Sasanians, consciously or unconsciously adopted much of the tradition of their predecessors, especially the Parthians, no matter how much they wished to promote the contrary narrative.

One last possibility which makes things much more tantalizing, is Marek Olbrycht's thesis that suggests that there were two branches of the Parthian family in competition, those which he calls the Sinatrukids and the Artabanids. According to him the Sinatrukids split off the eastern satrapies of Sistan, Drangiana, and Arachosia from the House of Artabanids and set up their own Indo-Parthian kingdom. He suggests that Ardashir I is in fact connected with the eastern Parthian family, (literary tradition about Sasanians), and that he was the son of the Gondopharid prince Sasan who was adopted by Pābag who overthrew the Younger Arsacid house.[31]

Thus, Ardashir's dream in the KAP may have had a closer connection with the

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[28] Bivar, 1983, p. 84.

[29] Tacitus XV.15. 1942.

[30] Tacitus, XV.15: 1942. www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper, For the Latin see, Tacitus, XV.15: 1906.

[31] Olbrycht, 2016, pp. 23-35.

Parthian heritage than we may assume. Whether we accept such a hypothesis or not, it is clear that the tradition entered into the Sasanian world via the Parthians and from the east. Thus, the white elephant of Harun al-Rashid, Abul Abbas who bathed in the Rhine and was presented to Charlemagne, was symbolically representing the notion of kingship in Iran for some time, and was borrowed from India.

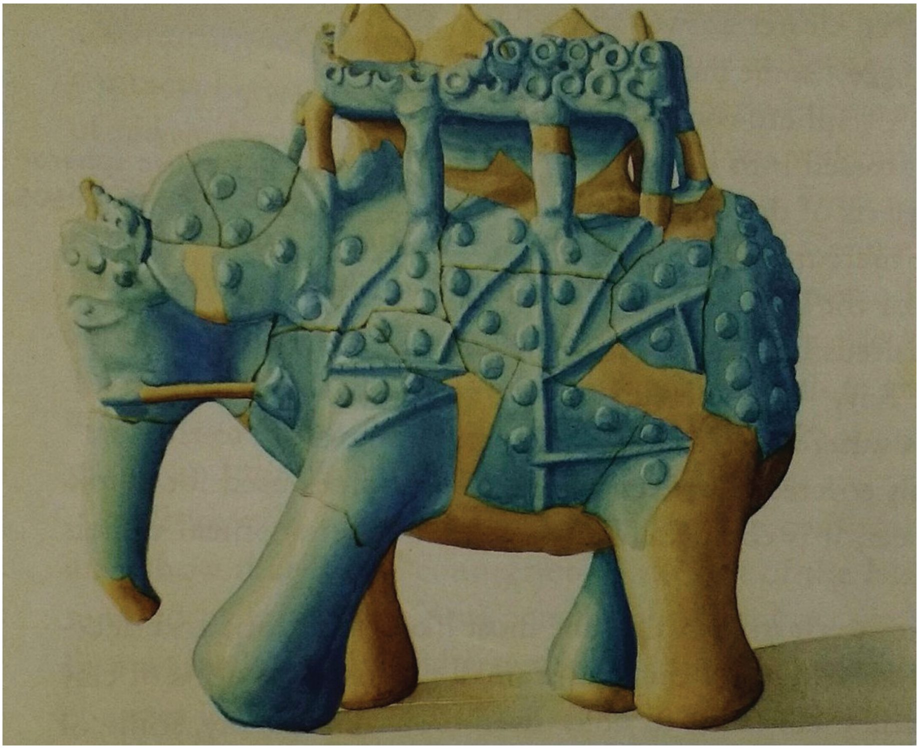

Figure. 1. Watercolor of a ceramic elephant figurine; fritware with turquoise glaze, artist unknown. Oriental Institute, RH 6105 - Courtesy of Tanya Treptow and The Oriental Institute Museum of the University of Chicago

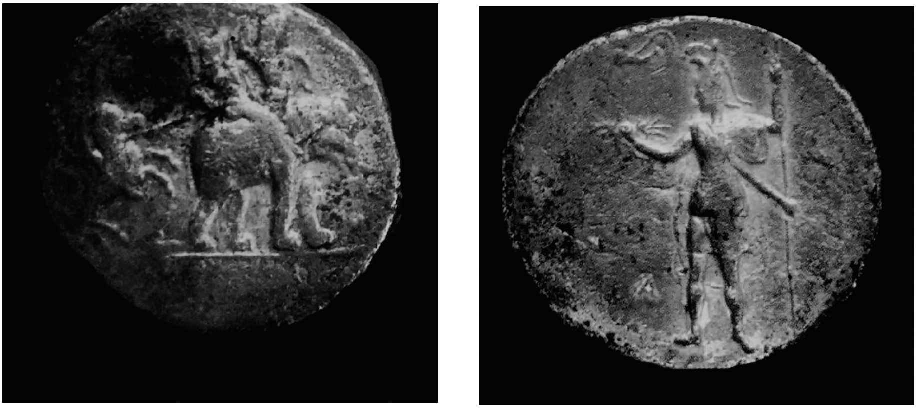

Figure. 2. Alexander's coinage from India. Courtesy of Osmond Bopearachchi and Philippe Flandrin.

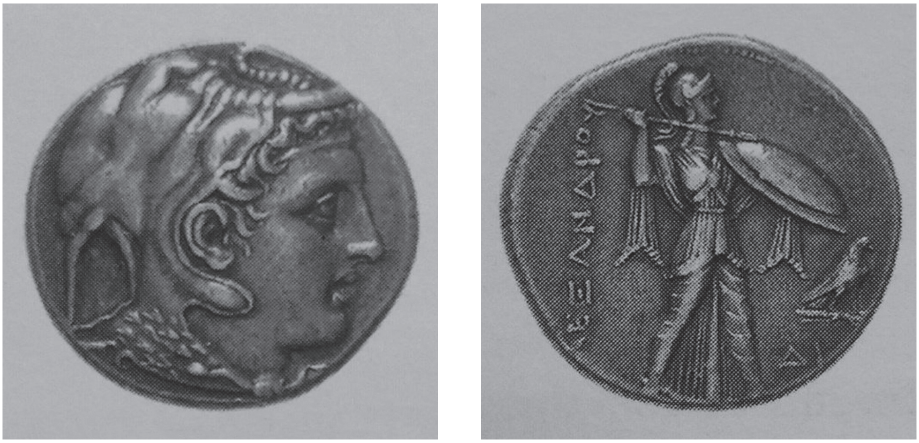

Figure. 3. Alexander with the elephant scalp. Courtesy of Osmond Bopearachchi and Philippe Flandrin.
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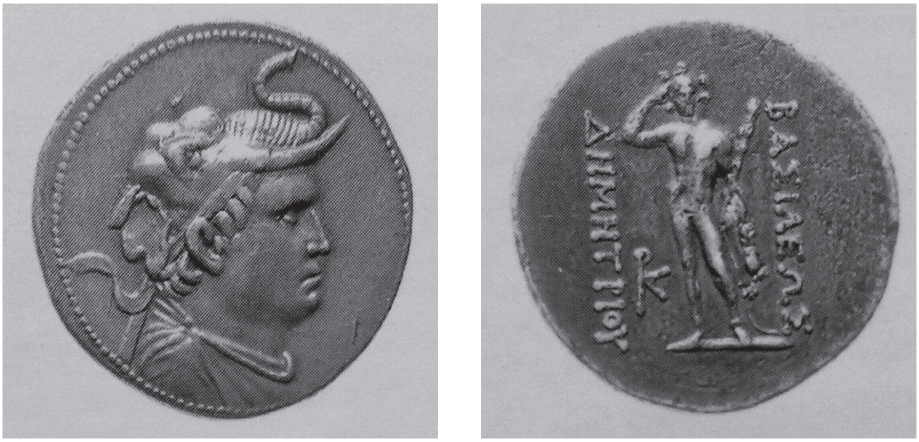

Figure. 4. Coinage of Demetrius I. Courtesy of Osmond Bopearachchi and Philippe Flandrin.
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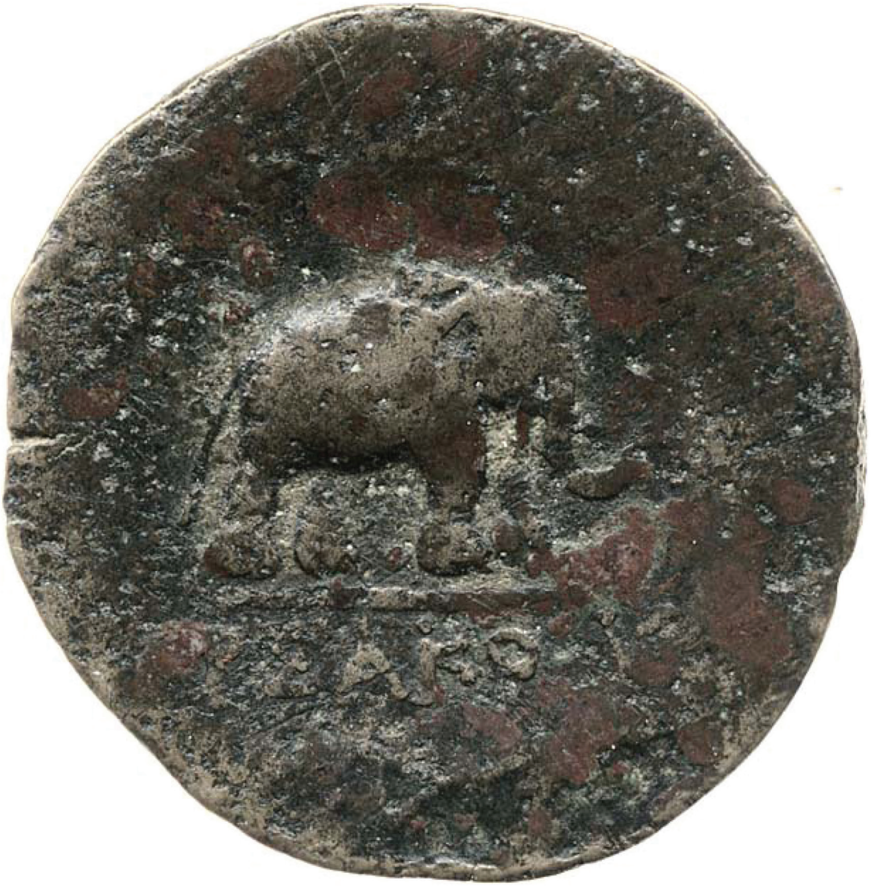

Figure. 5. Parthian coin from the East. Courtesy of Vesta Sarkhosh Curtis ©The Trustees of the British Museum.

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IN SEARCH OF MISSING LINKS: IRANIAN ROYAL PROTOCOL FROM THE ACHAEMENIDS TO THE MUGHALS

Frantz Grenet

According to the *Guiness Book of World Records*, the second largest hand-made carpet in the world is the one exhibited since 2001 at Ashgabat, the capital of Turkmenistan. It is about 300 square meters. Now displayed in a museum especially built for it, it was eventually destined for the reception hall of the palace of President Turkmenbashi, but this plan was changed after his sudden death in 2006. In both contexts it was obviously meant to function as a symbol of the greatness of the Turkmen state, or maybe of the Turkmen nation. Its more modest predecessor at Ashgabat, called *gigant* or giant in Russian, included human figures which explicitly celebrated the common rejoicing of the peoples of the Soviet Union.

Humayun's Carpet of Mirth and other "inventions"

No matter how enormous they are, both these carpets would have been dwarfed if put next to another "political" carpet which also had central Asian connections, namely the Carpet of Mirth (*bisāt-i nishāt*) of the second Mughal emperor Humayun, (r. 1530-40 and 1555-6) **(fig. 1)**. This carpet was round and could accomodate many people at the same time, perhaps up to 1400, though the textual descriptions are not without uncertainty on this point (explained below).

The Carpet of Mirth is known from its description in the *Qānun-i Humāyūnī* composed by the court historian Khwandamir (c. 1475-1534) in the early years of Humayun's reign;[1] this description was reproduced almost *verbatim* in Abu'l Fazl's *Akbarnāmah*,[2] at a time when Humayun's so-called ceremonial "inventions" (*ekhterāʿāt*) were discarded as trivial curiosities or even embarrassing quirks. In two recently published papers, Eva Orthmann has proved that they were more meaningful than they were thought to be by Akbar's (r.

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[1] Ed. Hidāyat Ḥosain 1940, pp. 110-112; transl. Prashad 1940, pp. 80-81.

[2] Transl. Beveridge 1897-1921, I, p. 361.

1556-1605) court.[3] My purpose in the present paper is to explore the background of some of these "inventions" and to suggest that at least the Carpet of Mirth, if not more among them, revived some very ancient court traditions of Iran - a topic which is appropriate in a volume devoted to the *longue durée*.

Despite the fact that Akbar directly succeeded Humayun's second reign as emperor, a change in the cultural values, perceptions and priorities of the court is still notable. Indeed, one example of a loss in the transmission of some values between the two reigns is manifest in the changed perception of Shaykh Ghawth, held as a great spiritual master under Humayun but ridiculed as an old quack when he tried to regain favour under Akbar in 1559, after a 19-year absence from the court.[4] Thus, the character and tenor of the court seems to have been determined by the reigning emperor, not infrequently at complete variance from that of his predecessor.

According to Orthmann, the aim of most of Humayun's "inventions" was to arrange the staging of power in such a way as to associate all social categories of the empire with a specific planet; in the various ceremonies over which he presided, the emperor took the place of the Sun or of God himself; in the latter case he sat outside the planetary circle, beyond the Atlas sphere.[5] All ceremonies implied a network of symbolic associations between planets, colors, days of the week, and social status. Each social category had to appear in the presence of the emperor on the day of its associated planet, and this protocol was rigidly observed, sometimes to the detriment of the proper conduct of state business: on one occasion some amateur rebels who clearly had acted on a stupid impulse and did no real harm were punished out of all proportion because they had the misfortune to appear on a Tuesday, the day Humayun was supposed to manage military affairs and to display martial dispositions! [6]

Clothes played a central part in these symbolic associations, for Humayun as well as those who attended his court were dressed according to the color of the planet of the day. Colored fabric was also used in two architectural structures meant for large gatherings. One was tri-dimensional: the Tent of the Zodiac Signs, used in particular for the Nawruz celebration, wherein the dark blue inner cover symbolized the sphere of the fixed stars, themselves actually represented by holes opening on to the white outer canopy symbolizing the Atlas sphere.[7] The other textile structure was two-dimensional: this was the Carpet of Mirth (**fig. 3**). Here the spheres of the stars and of Atlas formed the outer rings, while the seven inner rings were color-dyed according to the color traditionally associated with the planets including the Sun and the Moon. The two central rings were assigned to the natural elements.

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[3] Orthmann 2008; Orthmann 2010.

[4] Moin 2012, pp. 103-104.

[5] Orthmann 2010, p. 209.

[6] *Akbarnama*, transl. Beveridge, I, p. 314.

[7] *Qānūn-i Humāyūnī*, ed. Hidāyat Ḥosain, pp. 68-69; transl. Prashad, pp. 48-49.

According to Khwandamir "each section of the people was ordered to sit in accordance with one of the seven planets appropriate to it, in the circle to which it corresponded". He gives details for the Sun, the medium ring, assigned to Humayun himself and presumably also to princes, ministers and their retinues, for Jupiter, assigned to Sayyids and Ulamas, and for Saturn, assigned to Sufis and Indian nobles (the latter probably because of their dark complexion). Following the same logic, one might guess that Mars was assigned to warriors, Mercury to men of the pen, and the Moon and Venus to pages and musicians.[8]

Once everybody was positioned on the carpet "they used to throw dice on various sides of which figures of persons were painted; and whichever figure turned up on the throw from the hand of a person, he assumed the same position in his circle. For instance, if the picture of a standing person turned up he stood up, and if a seated one was presented he sat down, while if the reclining position was cast, he laid down and even went to sleep. Consequently this assembly produced extremely novel pictures and became a source of mirth and gaiety".

This description has led some scholars to brand the Carpet of Mirth as a manifestation of "superstition and childishness",[9] one more reason to question Humayun's mental condition. On the contrary, Orthmann has insisted on its central place in the visual propaganda: this gathering of many people, including the Emperor in person, functioned as a microcosm of the Mughal State, a sort of staged organization chart, indeed the only occasion when a broad selection of people from the upper classes could visualize each other's respective positions in the social and political machinery. The dice-throwing could also be used as a pedagogical device, demonstrating that even the pervasive influence of Fate was ultimately controlled by the Emperor. The Carpet of Mirth was abandoned by Humayun's successors, though royal audiences were still arranged in concentric rows, with the Emperor keeping a solar position and color along with a silver barrier alluding to the Moon circle **(Fig. 2)**.[10]

Possible Achaemenid Forerunners?

Even if the Carpet of Mirth had no real legacy, was it really without precedent, both in its structure and in its symbolism? In beginning to answer this question, I would like to draw attention to two concentrically organized structures attested in ancient Iranian history. The first are the so-called "ramparts" of Ecbatana described by Herodotus (c. 484-425 BCE) (I.98-99), and the second is the arrangement of Alexander's audiences in and around his tent. They need to be considered together (**fig. 4**).[11]

The construction of the "ramparts" of Ecbatana is attributed to the Median king Deioces who lived one and a half centuries before Cyrus. Herodotus tells us:

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[8] Such associations are documented in other protocolar occasions, see Moin 2012, p. 115-116.

[9] Gascoigne 1971, p. 48.

[10] On the miniature reproduced here, Jahangir has a solar halo and sits under a golden canopy while the first barrier is painted white, i.e. probably silvery (a more distant silver barrier enclosing the *manṣabdār* is mentioned in some descriptions, see e.g. Joshi 2010, p. 65).

[11] For a first comparison of these two texts see Grenet 2010.

"This stronghold is designed so that each successive circle is higher than the one below it just by the height of its bastions. This design is helped, of course, to a certain extent by the fact that the place is on a hill, but it was also deliberately made that way. There are seven circles altogether, and the innermost one contains the royal palace and the treasuries. The largest of the walls is approximately the same size as the wall around Athens. The bastions of the outer five circles have all been painted various colors : first white, then black, red, blue, and orange. But as for the bastions of the last two circles, the first are covered in silver and the second in gold. So Deioces had this stronghold built for himself, surrounding his own residence, but he told the whole population to build their houses outside the stronghold."[12]

Described here are concentric walls individualized by the specific color of their bastions (or crenels: *promacheōnes*): the royal residence in the center is golden, with the subsequent concentric walls being silvery, red/orange, blue, purple, black and white. It has long been recognized that the description can hardly refer to real city walls; in fact, Herodotus himself made clear that the lay people lived outside, and excavations at the site of Ecbatana have not brought to light any comparable layout.[13] Henri Frankfort saw this description as the seven storeys of some ziggurats (Borsippa, Khorsabad and Babylon) projected on the ground, as it were. Although at Khorsabad the crenels at the three lower storeys were in fact painted in white, black and red (moving up from the bottom), further archaeological corroboration is lacking.[14] More probably the description echoed a royal camp or an audience hall; also, the reference to the Medians might be mythical, to give more authority to what in fact might have belonged to Achaemenid protocol.[15] As for the disposition of colors, Henry Rawlinson had already demonstrated that they corresponded to the planetary week,[16] for almost the same match between colors and planets can be found in the alchemical tradition (and, one can add, in the Carpet of Mirth): the Sun is golden, the Moon silvery or white, or pale green when it is not full, this color being sometimes attributed to Venus instead ; Mars is red, Mercury blue, Jupiter purple (in some other contexts its color is qualified as "sandalwood"), Venus is usually white, and Saturn is always black. The only difference with the weekly order is the inversion between Venus and Saturn.

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[12] Translation R. Waterfield, *Herodotus. The Histories. A new translation,* Oxford, 1998, p. 46.

[13] Sarraf 1997. It must be noted, however, that the excavated remains are attributed to the Parthian period and that the Median-Achaemenid citadel might have stood on an adjacent mound (Tepe Mossalla): Stronach and Mousavi 2012, pp. 53-56. Admittedly, Jacques de Morgan published a reconstruction of Ecbatana where the scanty remains visible at his time were integrated in a plan extrapolated from Herodotus; this is sheer phantasy (see Boucharlat 2012, fig. 5; this article also contains up-to-date information about the excavations).

[14] Frankfort 1954, pp. 78-79. His description of the colors of the Babylon ziggurat, allegedly from Herodotus I.181, is in reality borrowed from the description of Ecbatana's ramparts!

[15] Diodorus Siculus, XVII.71, describes Persepolis as being encircled by three crenellated walls whose height increases from the outer one to the inner one. They are supposed to correspond respectively to the wall around the Kuh-i Rahmat, the Terrace wall and the Apadana wall.

[16] Rawlinson 1841, pp. 127-128. See also Vesel 1995.

Another reason to believe that Herodotus' description echoed Achaemenian royal audiences is its striking similarity with some ancient authors' vivid descriptions of Alexander's tent, a context which brings us closer to Humayun's textile structures. Athenaeus attributes this description to Phylarchus of Alexandria, now lost, but the ultimate source seems to have been the *Stories of Alexander* of Chares of Mytilene, who as Alexander's chamberlain had every reason to pay attention to the royal protocol (in fact Chares is explicitly quoted in a previous passage, 538, which appears to describe the same tent). The version in Polyaenus (*Strategemata* IV.3.24), ca 163 CE, is the most complete, while Athenaeus (*Deipnosophistae* XII.539), ca 228 CE, supplements or corrects some details:

"When Alexander delivered justice among the Macedonians or the Greeks he was known to pass moderate and democratic judgments, but among the Barbarians he was known to hold court in a splendid and dominating manner, impressing the Barbarians by the layout of the session. Indeed when he held court among the Bactrians, the Hyrcanians and the Indians, he did it under a tent arranged as follows. The tent contained a hundred couches and was supported by fifty golden columns. The roof was made of cloth artistically embroidered with gold. Inside, all round it, stood first of all 500 Persian *melophoroi* (*"apple-bearers"*) dressed in purple and quince-yellow. After the *melophoroi* stood archers in equal number (*differently in Athenaeus: 1000*), differentiated by the color of their clothes, for some were dressed in flame-color, other in dark blue, others in crimson. At the head of these stood 500 Macedonian Silver-Shields, very tall, and in the centre of the tent was placed the golden throne on which, seated in front of all, (Alexander) dealt with the affairs, and bodyguards stood on both sides of the king holding court. Around the tent stood the corps of decorated elephants, and 1000 Macedonians in Macedonian attire. In addition to them there were 500 Susians dressed in purple [Athenaeus specifies that this circle was added by Alexander], and after them, in a circle, 10 000 Persians, the most handsome and the tallest, decorated with all Persian ornaments, all with daggers."[17]

This list of nations among whom Alexander held court in such a way makes perfect sense: Hyrcania was the first country he penetrated after Darius had been killed near the Caspian Gates, leaving Alexander to assume Achaemenid legitimacy; Bactria was the major satrapy in the east, and India the ultimate one. As for the presence of elephants, we know from independant sources that he had already some at his disposal when he conquered Mesopotamia, though not many.[18]

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[17] Translation kindly supplied by Paul Bernard (from the edition by E. Woelfllin, Leipzig: Teubner, 1998). The curious ommission of this passage and of Athenaeus' parallel in Pearson 1960, pp. 50-61 (the section on Chares of Mytilene) seems to be due to the fact that the attribution to Chares is not explicit.

The circles of guards surrounding the king are described first inside the tent, from the outside to the center, then outside the tent, in reverse order, graphic support **(fig. 4)** being therefore indispensable to understanding the logic. Colors play a major role, either in dress, weapons, or skin (as in the case of black elephants). The center is occupied by Alexander's golden throne. The following ring is made of "Silver Shields", i.e. the Macedonian guards. Then a composite red and blue ring is mentioned, but as Athenaeus gives its number as twice that of the other rings inside the tent I assume that here two rings have been fused (either by Alexander's protocol or by textual transmission). Then comes purple with some added yellow, then the war elephants (always black in the Iranian pictorial tradition)[19], and finally the 10 000 Persian "Immortals" (on the Susa tiles Persian guards commonly identified with the "Immortals" are dressed mainly in white and yellow). In its broad outlines, this structure is similar to that in Herodotus' text and, consequently, one can suppose that here also the planetary symbolism was at work.

The total number of attendants is also interesting. In addition to Alexander and his immediate retinue the tent accommodated 2000 standing guards,[20] plus 11 000 outside, which amounts to a total of more than 13 000. According to Ctesias, Artaxerxes II's Greek physician (*apud* Athenaeus, IV.146), at the Achaemenid court 15 000 guests attended the royal banquets every day. It is tempting to suppose that this order of numbers had a particular symbolic value, maybe as representing the hundredth part of the *kāra*, the nation in arms. Xenophon (an eyewitness!) reports one million soldiers in the Persian army at the battle of Cunaxa in 401 (*Anabasis*, I.7.12), while Arrian gives the same number for the Persian foot-soldiers at Gaugamela (*Anabasis*, III.8.6), and on neither occasion were all imperial forces engaged. Of course such figures had certainly no relationship whatsoever to the real situation on the battlefields, but one cannot exclude that these Greek reports reflected a general perception of the military potential of the empire.

A comparison with Humayun's Carpet of Mirth is called for here. In Alexander's tent the colors of the planets are displayed by the attendants, while on the carpet they are marked on the ground, but one should keep in mind that in Humayun's weekly routine the Emperor and courtiers were dressed in the color of the day.[21] Alexander is surrounded by more than 13 000 people and Humayun perhaps by 1400,[22] but this crowd is large anyway, and comparable to the Alexander's 2000 attendants standing in the tent.

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[18] At Gaugamela (331) fifteen elephants were used by the Indian contingent and "a few" were protecting Darius himself (Arrian, *Anabasis*, III.8.6); subsequently the satrap of Susa presented twelve to Alexander (taken from the same stock?) (Quintus Curtius, V.2.10).

[19] See also the poetical image in Manuchihri: "When they ready the elephants by putting mirrors on their faces in his army camp, (enemies) blacken the clothes of the king of Africa" (quoted in Amirsoleimani 2003, p. 224).

[20] The passage quoted from Chares of Mytilene, Athenaeus IV.538, gives the circumference of the tent as four stadia, i.e. about 700 meters, more that it is necessary to accomodate 2000 attendants standing inside.

[21] Orthmann 2010, p. 205; Moin 2012, p. 116.

However, the planetary order differs: in Alexander's tent it is chronological, arranged according to the days of the week, [23] while on the Carpet of Mirth it is physical, centered on the Earth and arranged according to the relative distances from it. The latter order follows the Ptolemean cosmological tradition, popularized at that time mainly through the writings of Ibn ʿArabi (1165-1240).[24] Consequently the Sun King is no more in the centre, but in the median planetary ring. Lastly, Alexander's army corps are arranged by ethnic origin, while the Carpet of Mirth sorts out the various categories of State officers, into which group Sufis and religious scholars are also assimilated. Despite these differences, the underlying concept is strikingly similar and hard to detect in other political cultures: the structure of the State exposes itself, to others and to its own agents, in the shape of a gigantic planetary *mandala*.

Possible channels of transmission

Notwithstanding all the parallels noted above, the question of transmission and continuity still remains. A Central Asian – Timurid connection can possibly be detected for the other textile structure erected by Humayun, namely the Tent of the Zodiac. The name given to this structure, *khargāh* "big tent, royal tent", is consistently used for the temporary structure set up for the Central Asian magical practice of *jade*, rain-making, which was always carried out under royal control. In the Sogdian text P.3 (Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale), a set of instructions for the *jade* ritual probably composed for an Uighur king in the eighth or ninth century, the *khargāh* is decorated inside with astral figures painted on cloth hangings, as in Humayun's tent.[25] The practice of *jade* has a continuous history from the fifth-century CE Xiongnu to the Timurids.[26] It is perhaps significant that Humayun's *khargāh* is used for the celebration of Nawruz, at the time of the spring equinox, when rain is especially needed in Central Asia.

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[22] Orthmann 2008, p. 300 note 14, points to a difficulty in the reading of the text, as the translation reads "each of the seven circles is divided into two hundred grades, so that there are fourteen hundred seats in the seven circles", while the edited Persian text reads *dō ṣadr* "two places of honour" and *čahārdah ṣadr* "fourteen places of honor" instead of *dō ṣad* and *čahārdah ṣad*, so that the meaning should be "in each of the seven circles two places of honour are set apart, so that there are fourteen places of honour in the seven circles", In any case the general context implies a very large number of attendants.

[23] On the origins of this system see Beck 1988, pp. 73-85.

[24] Orthmann 2010, p. 216 note 13.

[25] Azarnouche et Grenet 2010; Grenet and Azarnouche 2012, pp. 171-173. I seize this opportunity to correct a mistake in the first article regarding the interpretation of the term *khargāh* (p. 54). Contrary to what we had surmised, it appears that the term *khargāh* and its Sogdian equivalent *xrγʼx* referred exclusively to the treillis tent (the yurt), a type of framed tent which is first identified in Inner Asia (the expression "25-headed *khargāh*" in P.3 meaning a treillis tent with 25 intersections in the wooden grid supporting the roof, and not a rectangular tent with five naves each comprising five bays as we wrote).

On the contrary, no such Central Asian connection appears for the Carpet of Mirth in its material form. The underlying astrological ideology which correlates planets, days, colors and mental dispositions, can be traced all the way through the Iranian culture from the pre-Islamic "Chaldaeans" and Sabeans down to Nizami's *Haft Paykar* (1201) and further. It was directly available to Humayun through the encyclopaedia *Javāhir al-ʻUlūm Humāyūnī*, presented to him by Muhammad Fazil Miskin Samarqandi.[27] Perhaps more significantly, the alchemical appropriation of the powers of planets played a major part in Fakhr al-Din Razi's *Sirr al-maktūm,* which had been translated into Persian for the Delhi sultan Iltutmish (r. c. 1211-1236);[28] this was also the case with the treatise *al-Jawāhir al-Khams* composed by the Sufi Shattari leader Shaykh Ghawth who, together with his brother Shaykh Pul, was very influential in shaping Humayun's divine claims during the first years of his reign.[29]

All that being said, pondering the planetary symbolism is one thing, staging it in royal audiences involving a great number of people is something else. Are there any traces of such a protocol between Alexander and Humayun? One is tempted to detect it in the Sasanian royal audiences at Nowruz and Mihragān, but the sources are frustrating as the only plausible eye-witness description, transmitted by Theophylact Simocatta (c. 570- c. 640) (*Histories*, IV.3.7-8),[30] refers to the private reception of an ambassador, and images of the King holding court are extremely simplified (**fig. 5**).[31] By combining scraps of information from the *Kitāb al-tāj* (a Pahlavi treatise known through an eighth-century Arabic summary)[32] and the later Persian texts *Fārs-nāmah*[33] (early twelfth century) and *Marzbān-nāmah* (ca 1210-1225*)*,[34] one understands that the public was seated in concentric rows according to the hierarchy and that these rows were differentiated by the color of their clothes. Though the association between color and social category was not necessarily determined by the planets, a combination of both symbolic systems is possible, as was always the case at Humayun's court. In addition, the *Šāhnāme* mentions that

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[26] Molnár 1994, *passim*. Babur (Humayun's father) mentions it as still practiced by some experts in his own entourage as well as by his Uzbek enemies (*id.*, pp. 52-54).

[27] Mo'in 2012, p. 122 note 85.

[28] Vesel 1994. The work was later on illuminated at Akbar's request.

[29] Mo'in 2012, pp. 101-104 (p. 102 note 26 on *Al-Jawāhir al-Khams*). See also Ali Anooshahr's paper in this volume.

[30] Transl. Whitby and Whitby 1986, p. 106.

[31] Harper and Meyers 1981, pp. 67-68, 113-114 129, pl. 19.

[32] Grignaschi 1966, pp. 103-108, 129-135.

[33] Transl. Le Stange and Nicholson 1921, p. 97.

[34] Ed. Rowšan 1355/1977, vol. 1, pp. 513 line 8 – 516 line 1.

Khosrow Parviz (r. 590-628) held drinking parties on a large carpet, "57 [cubits] square", which carried depictions of the planets, of the seven climes (which were also shown on the Carpet of Mirth) and of the Kings of the world; but the text specifies that the carpet was square, which seems to exclude that the planets were indicated as concentric rings.[35] The *Qānun-i Humāyūnī* contains many references to Alexander and Khosrow Anoshervan (r. 531-579), a commonplace in Persian political literature. More to the point, it also mentions that Humayun instituted the "Drum of Justice" which any visitor to the palace could beat in order to call the King's attention to his complaint, thereby reviving in a slightly different variant one custom of Khosrow, the chain with bells attached to it.[36] Therefore one should not exclude that conscious imitation of the Sasanians played some part in the invention of the Carpet of Mirth.

One wonders also whether the Ghaznavid (c. 990-1186) courts of Ghazni and Lahore, with their well-known emphasis on dress and their lavish protocol, were among the intermediaries. The mace-bearers (*mīr tūzak*, *gurzbardār*) who seated the attendants, sometimes quite brutally, at Mughal audiences, are already attested with other names under the Saljuks, the Ghaznavids and the Tughlūqs,[37] and they appear on the paintings from the Ghaznavid palace at Lashkari-bazar (**fig. 6**).[38] Nevertheless Baihaqi, our main source on Ghaznavid court life, confirms the importance of the colors of clothes but gives no evidence for a concentric arrangement of audiences, and the symbolism of colors, when specified, is purely Islamic: black is a sign of allegiance to the Abbasid caliph, not the color of Saturn; white means mourning, not the Moon or Venus.[39]

At the moment it seems wiser not to conclude about the degree of continuity between the protocol of the ancient Persian court and the Carpet of Mirth. From the material we have, we cannot decide whether this was a reinvention based on common symbolic principles, or precise instructions for such cosmic *durbār* were gathering dust in chancery archives until, from time to time, a ruler had the will and means to revive them.

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[35] Ed. Khāleghi-Motlagh 1386/2007, vol. 8, pp. 280-281 (verses 3623-3635).
See Ortmann 2008, p. 302.

[36] Ed. Hidāyat Ḥosain, p. 114; transl. Prashad, p. 82. On the Sasanian custom see Nizam al-Mulk, transl. Darke 1978, pp. 40-41. A similar custom was reported about China (the "Bell of the Oppressed").

[37] Joshi 2010, pp. 83-94, who provides detailed references.

[38] Schlumberger 1978, pp. 61-65, pls. 121-124.

[39] See Amirsoleimani 2003, especially pp. 229, 234.

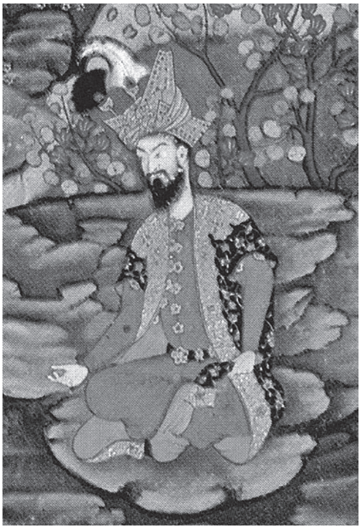

Figure. 1. The only surviving lifetime portrait of Humayun. Gulshan album (Kabul, probably 1546), Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin – Preussischer Kulturbesizt (*Libr. Pict. A117, fol. 15a*). The King's face no longer exists as it was lost in 1985 when the picture travelled to an exhibition in New York. (F. Ory, from http://asianart.com/articles/parodi/index.html)

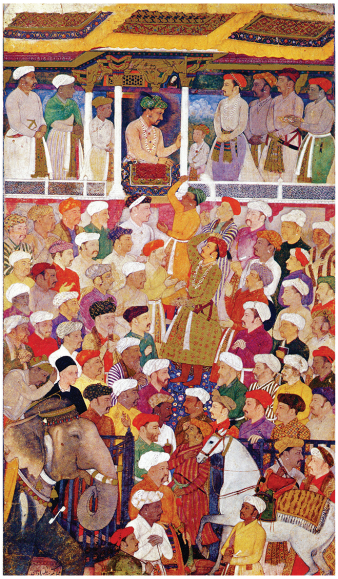

Figure. 2. *Durbar* of Jahangir, miniature attributed to Abu'l Hasan and Manohar, ca. 1620 (Museum of Fine Arts, Boston; F. Ory, from Welch 1978, pl. 17)

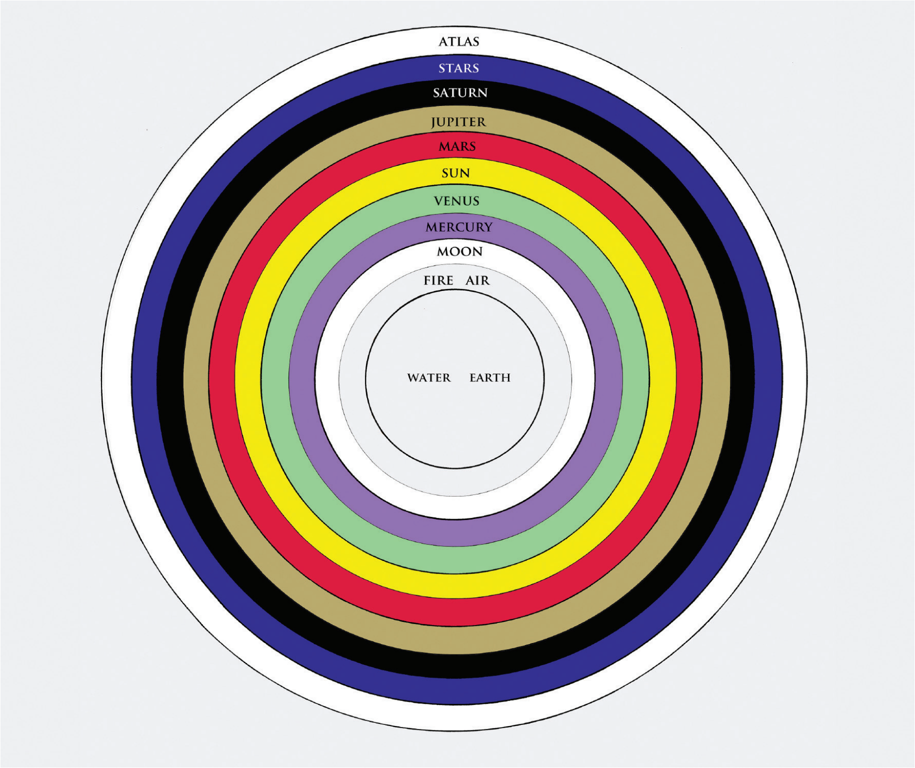
ATLAS
STARS
SATURN
JUPITER
MARS
SUN
VENUS
MERCURY
MOON
FIRE AIR
WATER EARTH

Figure. 3. Layout of the Carper of Mirth (F. Ory, adapted from Orthmann 2010, fig. 11.3)

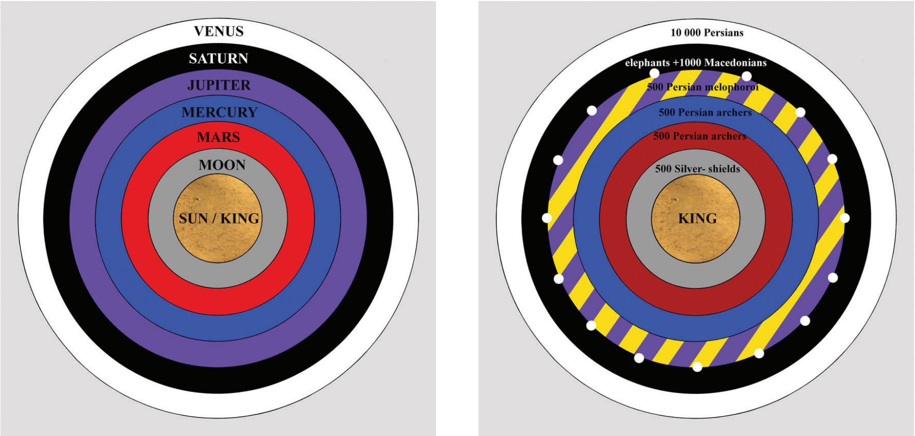
VENUS
SATURN
JUPITER
MERCURY
MARS
MOON
SUN / KING
10 000 Persians
elephants +1000 Macedonians
500 Persian melophoroi
500 Persian archers
500 Persian archers
500 Silver- shields
KING

Figure. 4. Layout of Ecbatana's "ramparts" (left) and Alexander's tent (right) (F. Grenet, F. Ory)

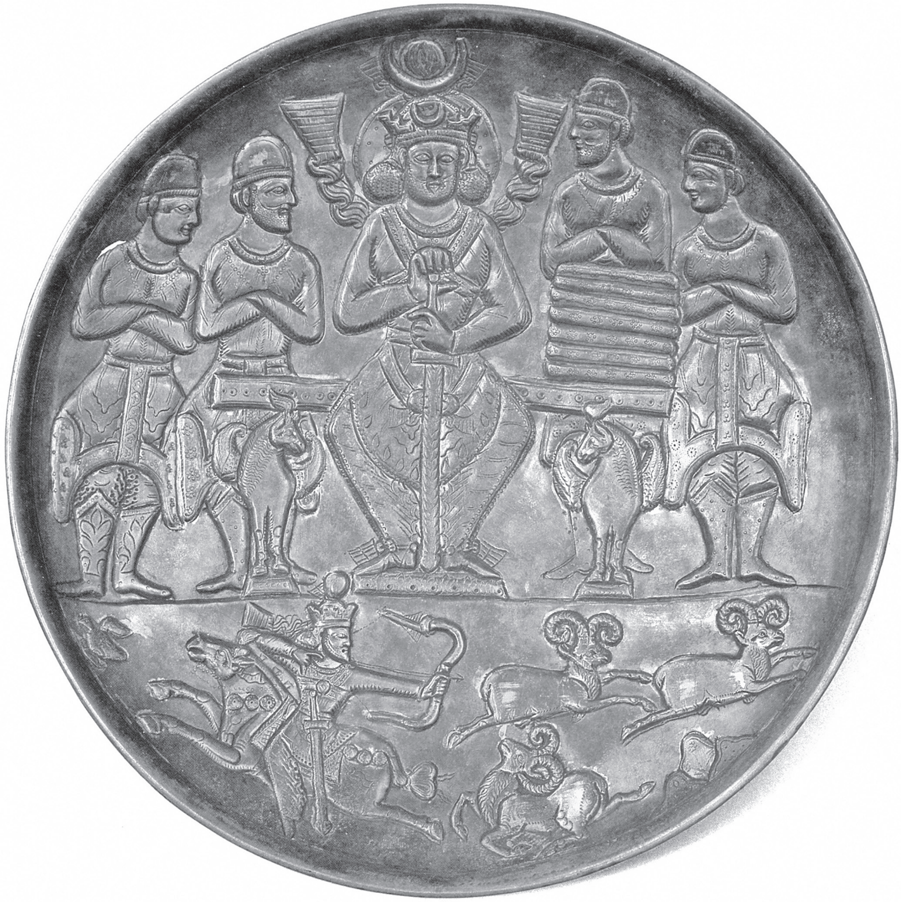

Figure. 5. Sasanian silver plate from Strelka, showing Kawad I or Khosrow I Anoshervan, Hermitage Museum (F. Ory, from Harpers and Meyers 1981, pl. 19)

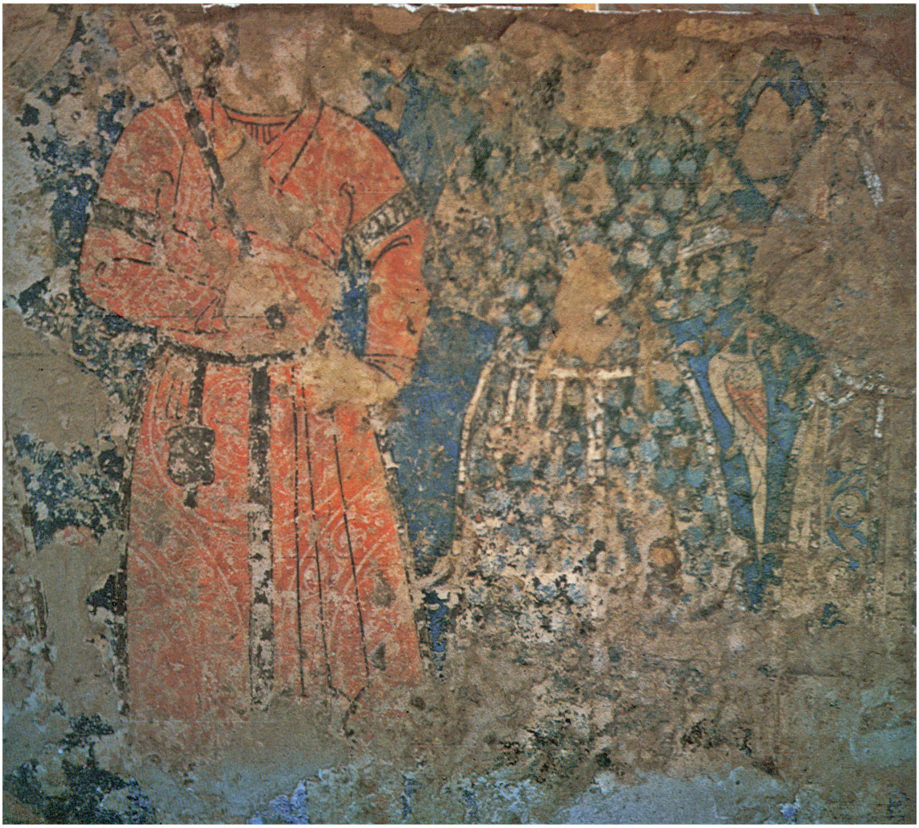

Figure. 6. Two mace-bearers at Lashkari-Bazar (F. Ory, from Schlumberger 1978, pl. 122 b)

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THE SHAYKH AND THE SHAH: ON THE *FIVE JEWELS* OF MUHAMMAD GHAWS GWALIORI

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In the last quarter of the fifteenth century, a Sufi Shaykh by the name of ʿAbd Allah Shattari (d. 1485) journeyed from Iran through Central Asia to India, and began preaching the doctrine of Shattari Sufism. Shaykh ʿAbd Allah engaged in behavior that was quite unusual for Indian Sufis. He travelled widely, dressed in royal robes, and had his followers don armor (Nizami, 1950, 57). While his actions may have surprised Indian Sufis, they would not have been so unusual in the Iranian plateau whence he arrived. This is because a contemporary of Shaykh ʿAbd Allah, the head of the Safavid order Shaykh Haydar of Ardabil, had also engaged in very similar behavior at about the same time in the 1470's and '80's. He and his followers had exchanged their Sufi robes for armor in their quest for power in Anatolia and the Caucasus (Khunji, 2003, 267-268).

Indeed, unlike many contemporary South Asian Sufis, the Shattari order in India shared a fundamental similarity with the Safavids of Iran, namely the direct pursuit of secular rule. As Simon Digby and others have argued, late Sultanate Sufi orders tended to compete, not collaborate, with kings over influence and authority in north Indian societies. Moreover, the sphere of activity for the sultans and shaykhs were independent from one another—one operating from the royal court and the other from the Sufi lodge (Digby 1990, Aquil 2008). The Shattaris, however, gained access to an imperial *durbar* when the leaders of the order in the early sixteenth century, namely, Shaykh Muhammad Ghaws Gwaliori and his brother Shaykh Phul, joined the newly founded Mughal state. To date, scholars have spent less time on the political side of the brothers' teaching than its mystical aspects. For instance, we now possess a considerable body of literature that has analyzed the influence of "Hindu" religion on the Shattaris, generally concluding that, while the Gwaliori brothers certainly had knowledge of Indic religious practices, their teaching was firmly rooted in Islamic occult sciences (Gaborieau, Ernst 1996, Ernst 2003). The present article will rather focus on three aspects of Shattari doctrine that distinguished it from other contemporary orders: their emphasis on ritual, their bold promise of visionary and miraculous powers (Ernst, 2008) to their followers, and their unapologetic connection to the political sphere.

But first, a brief note on the historical background: Muhammad Ghaws Gwaliori was nine years old when he found his spiritual mentor (Haq 1982, Kugle 2003, Ernst 1999). He had "felt the fire of love" from early on in life and a dream brought him to the *pir* [elder/ master], Shaykh Tahur Chachi in Chunar. When the old man met him, he told the boy that God had promised him a son and now he has been delivered to him (Ghaws, *Javahir*, 3a). He instructed his young disciple for sometime, and afterwards sent him out to the mountains outside the fortress of Chunar. Shaykh Muhammad spent thirteen years and four months in solitude, practicing austerities and writing down his experiences. When he returned, he showed his elder what he had written, and the *pīr* approved, telling him he was ready to go instruct the people (Ghaws, *Javahir*, 3b). The year was 1521/2. A lot happened in the ensuing three decades. The Mughals conquered north India, and Shaykh Muhammad and his brother Shaykh Phul entered politics. Shaykh Muhammad used his prestige in order to help Babur (r. 1526-30) take the fort of Gwalior. Shaykh Phul rose to become Humayun's (r. 1530-44, 1555-6) spiritual advisor.

Sufi orders were of course some of most powerful social organizations in India during the period, and it was reasonable for the new Mughal state to establish good relationships with them. This occurred mainly during the reign of Emperor Humayun for the following reasons: for one, the new regime had been rejected by the greatest living Chishti Shaykh ʻAbd al-Quddus Gangohi (d. 1537) who had referred to the Mughals as enemies of Islam and who was much more closely connected to many of the Afghan rebels fighting Humayun (Digby 1974, 71). The Suhravardi order, counting among its adherents the poet and mystic Shaykh Jamali, did indeed join the Mughal court but did not appear to wield much political power as they had little influence outside the court. The Central Asian Naqshbandis who had come to India with Babur were too troublesome, and moreover attached themselves to the Mughal military elites who were proving difficult to control for Humayun. The Shattaris, on the other hand, were very much connected to the vernacular culture of North India, and were also free of the problematic political associations that marred the other groups.

This explanation runs against the comments of early scholars such as K.A. Nizami, who argued that the Shattaris had a "magnificent superstructure" but their foundations were laid in "quicksand" (Nizami 59). Nizami contended that common people in Hindustan could not understand Shaykh Muhamamd's doctrine (Nizami 60). More recent scholarship has challenged this view, however. For instance the late Aditya Behl demonstrated how the complex doctrines of the head of the order were simplified and filtered down by bilingual Sufis who composed mystical romances in north Indian vernaculars (Behl 2001, xi-xlvii).

Nevertheless, the connection to power did indeed prove costly and risky for the Shattaris. Shaykh Muhammad's brother, Shaykh Phul was murdered in 1540 by a brother of the emperor and a group of his fellow rebels from among the Mughal army. When the Afghans regrouped under Sher Shah Sur and drove the Mughals out of India for about fifteen years, Shaykh Muhammad went into exile in Gujarat, where he was ill treated by other Sufis (Kugle 30-34). After Mughal rule was reestablished in 1555, Shaykh Muhammad was coolly received at the court of the new emperor Akbar (r. 1556-1605). He died in obscurity shortly after the Mughal restoration (Qadri 1996, 63-77). The Shaykh did nonetheless manage to complete the final version of his doctrinal text, the *Javahir-i Khamsa* or *Five Jewels* before his death. He wrote in the preface to the final draft that he wished people to compare all older manuscripts with the final version, which was to supersede the previous versions (Ghaws, *Javahir,* fl. 4a).

What does the *Javahir* tell us about the practice of Shattari sufism? At the center of Shaykh Muhammad's teaching was the practice of invocation (*da'vat*) of the great names of God (*asmā-i 'uzzām*). These are discussed in the "third jewel," which covers over 100 manuscript folios, comprising over a third of the whole work. The Shaykh gave detailed prescriptions for the attainment of tremendous miraculous powers and visions. The prospective student had to learn the craft of invocation from the Perfect Guide (*murshid-i kāmil*), who, the Shaykh explained, was one who had understood in every degree the divine names without being proud of the fact. Nor should he ever divulge them except to those who were trustworthy (*mahram*), and then only after being asked (Ghaws, *Javahir*, fl. 70a). Those who were untrustworthy (*nā'mahram*) included women, children, slave boys, slave girls, and the like (Ghaws, *Javahir*, fl. 111a).

Those with lower standards and accomplishments than the Perfect Guide may give permission for the seeker to invoke, but that would make the invocation less effective. Muhammad Ghaws wrote that he himself travelled in many regions in order to comprehend the names. Nowhere did he find someone who could reassure him until he found Shaykh Tahur Chahchi who pitied him, made him privy to the mysteries, and mentored him (Ghaws, *Javahir*, fl. 70a). This is when our author spent his years in solitude practicing invocation until he witnessed indescribable visions. In the reciting of these names there exists danger of death (*khatar-i jān*) (Ghaws, *Javahir*, fl. 70b). Many seekers, he warned ominously, ignorantly entered the practice and lost their lives due to panic and bewilderment (*tahayyur*) (Ghaws, *Javahir*, fl. 80a).

How was the Shattari practice different than contemporary Sufi teachings? As stated above, Shaykh Muhammad's method stands out from other Sufi orders in three particular ways: its emphasis on ritual, its foregrounding of politics, and its vivid description of visions. I will begin with hierarchy and ritual. If one religious trend in fifteenth- and sixteenth-century India was represented by the Bhakti poets and their rejection of vertical social hierarchies and rituals, another as taught by Shaykh Muhammad emphasized the privilege of interiority vs. exteriority and required detailed formal procedure of its own. In other words, unlike other contemporary mystical movements the Shattaris re-emphasized rituals of which only the initiated could impart knowledge, and therefore instituted another kind of hierarchy. In order to determine the proper time and place of a particular invocation, for example, the seeker had to consult astrological tables, know the connection of each name with the four elements, calculate the sign of the zodiac, the four directions, and seven planets (Muhammad Ghaws, *Javahir-i Khamsa*, fl. 70b-72a). Several days before beginning the invocation, the seeker had to purge himself by undergoing a period of strict abnegation. He should eat, speak, and sleep very little. He should state his intention, uphold uninterrupted fast, isolate himself from people, punish his ego, wear clean clothes, avoid animals, only receive food and drink from a trusted and appointed servant, and neither look at nor smell animal flesh. Under no condition should he come into contact with meat, fish, egg, honey, or musk. He should also keep away from oil, milk, yogurt, vinegar, salt, date, and mango. He should certainly wear no make-up or sewn garments. Dealing with blood was also prohibited (Muhammad Ghaws, *Javahir-i Khamsa*, fl. 73a). Failing to maintain this list of strictures could lead to death during the session (Muhammad Ghaws, *Javahir-i Khamsa*, fl. 73b).

When the appointed day arrived, the seeker found a secluded place in which the voice of another could not reach him, such as a mountain or field where no one else was present (Muhammad Ghaws, *Javahir-i Khamsa*, fl. 85b). Other acceptable places were deserts, riversides, orchards, or anywhere the seeker could hang upside down while praying (Muhammad Ghaws, *Javahir-i Khamsa*, fl. 100a). Then the seeker would paint the ground beneath him with red, yellow, or green, place a prayer mat atop that, and begin to invoke the names (Muhammad Ghaws, *Javahir-i Khamsa*, fl. 85a-86a). There were forty-one. Here is where the teaching of the *Javahir* differs from the kind of practice expressed in the Sultanate-period Sufi materials such as the hagiography of the contemporary ʿAbd al-Quddus Gangohi, but also the discourses of Nizam al-Din Awliya, or the treatises of Jamali Dihlavi. The Shattari leader promised and described a number of startling visions while simultaneously making bold moves towards political power.

The vivid intensity of the visions described by Shaykh Muhammad were unmatched by anything found in the writings of Jamali or the biography of ʿAbd al-Quddus: The Shattari visions began about a third of the way through the *Javahir*. After all the necessary preparations, the seeker began invoking the Names until the spirits of the Biblical and Islamic prophets come and stand before him. They will be wrapped in a glow of light and will take him on a journey to the beyond. This otherworld is represented by ten *khaniqah*s or Sufi lodges (Muhammad Ghaws, *Javahir-i Khamsa*, fl. 127b-128a). When, in the first *khaniqah*, the invoker encountered a one-eyed old man with an astrolabe before him, he (the invoker) should stand away and remain silent. The spirits of the prophets would talk to the old man, who would say that he was already informed by the occult that God had accepted the invoker. In the second *khaniqah* the invoker and his prophet-spirit companions would come upon a handsome old man sitting and perusing register books open before him. He too will aver that he has already read in the book of God's acceptance of the invoker (Muhammad Ghaws, *Javahir-i Khamsa*, fl. 128a). In the third *khaniqah*, another handsome man would sit before instruments of music, stating that he too had already discovered in those musical instruments that God had accepted the young *dervish*. In the fourth *khaniqah* an all-loving being would be manifested and the invoker would turn into pure light, which signified his high rank. Here, a holy man [*shakhs-i rawhani*], endowed with all the good qualities, would be found sitting before many swords, encircled by countless birds singing beautifully around him. The prophet-spirits would talk to him and he too would admit that he knew, from before creation, that the invoker was accepted by God. In the fifth *khaniqah*, the prophet-spirits will talk to an imposing, totally red figure sitting with an unsheathed sword, who would say that he knew from several thousand years before that the invoker would arrive. At the sixth *khaniqah*, an old man full of light, evincing the signs of good fortune (Muhammad Ghaws, *Javahir-i Khamsa*, fl. 128b) and resembling the ʿulama and the judges, would also state that he had read in the protected tablet about the arrival of the traveler (invoker). At the seventh *khaniqah* another daunting figure, this time an old man who is all black, also claims he had knowledge of the invoker for several thousand years.

When the party arrives at the eighth *khaniqah*, it witnesses an impressive scene. Various groups in full or partial prostration are reciting the names of the prophets (Muhammad Ghaws, *Javahir-i Khamsa*, fl. 129a), some in group prayers and others in individual prayers, with still others dancing with joy, but all of them totally rapt in their acts of devotion among lamps resembling icicles drooping all around. The prophet-spirits would greet the invoker, but he should remain silent. Suddenly the master of the prophets [i.e. the prophet Muhammad] will rise up and say aloud three times, “O dedicated, pure, and knowledgeable worshippers of God, listen, listen, listen!” The tumult will immediately stop and all will give ear. Prophet Muhammad will read a sermon and then ask the other prophets, ‘O intimates of God, what do you say about this reciter of praises?” They would unanimously state that he is accepted. At the ninth *khaniqah*, an old, knowledgeable and wise man would be addressed by the prophet Muhammad as brother, and they would begin debating matters from sacred scriptures. It would appear as if each hair of the old man had turned into a human and they would all ask him about the invoker, to which the old man would also say that he had read about him in the protected tablet. Finally, they would all turn toward the world of the occult and ask God to accept the reciter of praises. Suddenly a loud voice would arise and say:

> Master of the prophets and the best of men [i.e. Muhammad], know this that from the day this invoker began his prayers, we had him be accepted by God. Make this known: we have given all the actions and powers of the angels to Gabriel. Also, the acceptance and power that all the prophets possessed, we gave to Muhammad. Because of the invocation that this man has made for our love, we have given him the benefits of the rank of Gabriel and Muhammad. We have shown him the straight path. Should any son of man recite this name several times, the ranks of the prophets and friends [of God] will be registered in his book.

Immediately after this awesome scene a great voice will order, “return, return, return!” All the dwellers of the *khaniqah* will come forward and kiss the invoker’s hand (Muhammad Ghaws, *Javahir-i Khamsa*, fl. 129b-130b), embrace him and disappear. The invoker, who by now begins to feel the effects of coming down, will weep uncontrollably due to the feeling of separation. No traveler, the *Javahir* concludes, will see such a sight for a thousand years, and if he speaks of it to any one, he will not be believed. Such intense and vivid description of ecstatic visions are lacking in contemporary Sufi writings, represented by Jamali Dihlavi or ‘Abd al-Quddus Gangohi.

But the *Javahir* diverges from such texts in another important way. This is because the political dimension of Shaykh Muhammad’s message is expressed far more unabashedly than that of his contemporaries. The textual remains of major Sufi figures from the Sultanate period usually express disdain for worldly power and are quite critical of kings.

Not the *Javahir*, in which broadly political goals presuppose an intimate relationship between the invoker and the monarch or other great men of state. This is of course natural given Shaykh Muhammad Ghaws's close association with the Mughal court during the reign of the Humayun. Some of the invocations were meant for a person who has access to a monarch and wishes to bend their will to his own. These were probably derived from the experience of the Shaykh at the court. He writes, for example:

> When he appears before the Padshah [emperor], let him [the invoker] recite [the prayer] seventeen times while facing him and let him blow in his face [i.e. the Padshah's]. If he is not near, let him signal from a distance. When the Padshah's gaze falls upon [the invoker], if he has been invoking ahead of time, the Padshah will divulge to him the secret of his heart, and the Padhshah will unintentionally feel a great love toward him even if he had been annoyed at him before (Muhammad Ghaws, *Javahir-i Khamsa*, fl. 110a-110b).

These are interesting lines indeed from a man who intimately experienced the vicissitudes of court life in north India and Gujarat. Yet the author's self-assured ambition is also worth noting; the Shaykh had no doubt about the efficacy of his formulae. Other passages reflect the same kind of poise and desire for mastery:

> If someone wants the sultans of the age to be obedient to and captured by him, he must forge a silver seal and inscribe this name on it. After fulfilling the required pre-conditions for twenty-nine days, let him begin the invocation. Then let him place that seal on his finger. When he goes to the sultan, let him look upon the seal many times. But he should not act in such a way as to attract the sultan's attention. This way, respect for the invocation will be maintained. Without a doubt, the sultan will become obedient, enthralled, and captured by him, and will seek out his company (Muhammad Ghaws, *Javahir-i Khamsa*, fl. 111a).

The political ambitions of the Shaykh, as expressed in these formulae, were audacious. His ultimate goal was the subjugation of the ultimate master—the monarch himself. His metaphors make his objectives very clear. He wants to "capture" [*taskhīr*] the king and make him "obedient" [*mutī'*]. For all his insistence on subtlety, Muhammad Ghaws Gwaliori's aspiration to power was sure to bring him into trouble with the masters he served and tried to manipulate. Other prayers in the *Javahir* are meant precisely to ward off such dangers. He writes, "If a Padshah, a tyrant [*zālim*], or a commander [*amīr*] is planning to kill somebody, let that person recite this name a thousand and forty-one times a day for forty days. God will bring kindness to the heart of the Padshah and those others" (Muhammad Ghaws, *Javahir-i Khamsa*, fl. 152a). These are haunting words from a man whose brother was executed in 1540 by Mirza Hindal, Emperor Humayun's brother, on trumped up charges of treason.

By the time he revised his book for the last time, over a decade later, with these memories deep in his heart, the Shaykh knew that his doctrine had to offer something to the monarchs as well. This he did along a range of possibilities, some of which were very general: "If a Padshah, vizier, or governor [*hākim*] has been thwarted in his affairs for some reason, let him bring forth the divine invoker, so that their affairs maybe righted again. This is because the good of the Padshah is the welfare of the world" (Muhammad Ghaws, *Javahir-i Khamsa*, fl. 118b). Here, the promise is broad enough that it can entail a wide range of possibilities. What is significant, nevertheless, is the author's willingness to prioritize and universalize the interest of the ruling elite. Few other Sufi writers of the period shared Shaykh Muhammad's view.

At times, however, the help pledged to the monarch was very specific, particularly when it involved military matters:

> If someone wants to disperse the foreign enemy, let him pick some dirt from the feet of the Padshah's horse and bring it to the invoker. The invoker should invoke the name seven thousand times, and then puff on that dirt. Then let him stand up in the middle of his army, then see where the enemy sultan is standing, and where the center of their army is positioned. Then let him blow the dust against them and say "I have scattered you", and let him clap his hands so that the sound may reach the ear of the enemy. Then let him resume the invocation. Suddenly the enemy host will scatter and victory will be achieved (Muhammad Ghaws, *Javahir-i Khamsa*, fl. 138a).

As incredible as this hypothetical scene may appear, we know from independent documentation that it was indeed practiced. In the 1530s, while Humayun was in Gujarat, his brother Mirza Hindal; and the Emperor's spiritual advisor Shaykh Phul (Shaykh Muhammad Ghaws's brother) met an army of rebels led by Ulugh Mirza on the shore of the Ganges River in Qannauj and defeated them. The rebels fled to Awadh where they were joined by allies, and thus the two armies camped before each other in a stand-still that lasted two months. Mirza Hindal we are told, constantly chafed under inactivity and wanted to charge the enemy. However he would be prevented by Shaykh Phul who would say, "Be patient. I am busy invoking the names. God willing they will scatter by themselves" (Jawhar Aftabachi, *Tazkirat al-Vaqi'at*, 86). The opposition did not scatter but was eventually defeated. Nevertheless Shaykh Phul's invocation was undoubtedly undertaken very much in the style prescribed by his brother some years later.

Alternative prayers for the same purpose recommend that the invoker should go to the front line, put his index fingers on his ears, recite the holy name seventy-one times and puff towards the enemy, saying, "I shut the hands, feet, and tongues of soldiers, horses, elephants, by the command of God almighty and by the honor of the great name". The invoker could rest assured that they would all be defeated. Another approach would have the invoker imagine the enemy in the color red or yellow tilting towards black, all the while reciting the appropriate names (Muhammad Ghaws, *Javahir-i Khamsa*, fl. 142b).

Of course, the doctrine as taught by the Shaykhs of Gwalior was not simply for kings. Rather, some of Shaykh Muhammad's invocations were specifically addressed to high ranking grandees. To them he vouchsafed both political as well as religious glory. He writes,

> If a great man among the grandees [*akābir*] of the age wishes to attain a higher status than the one he has, and have all the other grandees and nobles [*buzurgān ashrāfān va a'yan*] be eager for his company and obey him, and not challenge his orders or rebel against him or show arrogance [*takabbur*] towards him, but love and follow him, let him recite the aforementioned invocation seventeen thousand times a day for seventeen days. If it is glory he seeks, and status, pomp, and wealth, he shall attain it. He will obtain his worldly and spiritual needs. But if he is after the ranks and positions of the true universe and certain knowledge, he will reach true perfection and will lead the wayfarers of the [spiritual] path. And even if perhaps he should desire a kingdom and kingship, he will acquire it all once he completes the invocation (Muhammad Ghaws, *Javahir-i Khamsa*, fl. 112a).

This mixed bag of guarantees contained very general promises. Politically, it is interesting to see that the Shaykh has left his options open. Presumably, a grandee who followed the Shaykh's instructions and attained kingship would have to overthrow a monarch already in place. Should this happen in the same geographical area, then royal patronage is assured the Shattari order regardless of dynastic change. Alternatively, Shaykh Muhammad could end up with the luxury of having two devotees ~~in~~ on the throne in different kingdoms.

Now, while the *Javahir* partially appealed to the social elite, the bulk of the promises made by Muhammad Ghaws targeted issues with which less powerful individuals had to wrestle. For instance, a number of the visions of monarchy he described were obviously from the perspective of those who, unlike the Shaykh himself, would have little direct access to a courtly setting and would have to recognize royal processions from particular signs. The following provides a good example of this: "At night a rider wearing royal clothes with a parasol over his head will appear with various soldiers around him. He will dismount from the saddle, remove the parasol from his head, and sit politely" (Muhammad Ghaws, *Javahir-i Khamsa*, fl. 154a). This vision replicates the experience of many a royal visit to holy men in sixteenth-century north India, and Muhammad Ghaws too may have had a visit like this early on in life. Another vision probably draws and expands on a similar encounter:

> On the fortieth day [of the invocation] a great tumult will arise, and whether in daytime or night, men of diverse faces on horseback arrive, each holding a lit torch. Suddenly in the midst of them will appear a sultan atop a lion and his face will be like the full moon and glorious and dignified. All around him will be servants with trays of gold and jewels for strewing, and he will be attended by a thousand fairies. They will greet the invoker. He should rise and place two hands on his chest and answer by signs and certainly not give speech to his tongue (Muhammad Ghaws, *Javahir-i Khamsa*, fl. 132b-133a).

While it is a safe to assume that Humayun, Sher Shah Sur (d. 1545), or Bahadur Shah of Gujarat (d. 1537) never rode on lions, other details (trays of jewels to be strewn, moonfaced beauties accompanying the king, a motley crowd of horsemen, lit torches, and the polite reaction of the Shaykh) are again very likely images of what a royal encounter would look like to notable men who nevertheless had little access to the actual court.

However, these occasional and spectacular visits notwithstanding, the *Javahir* assumed that a great many encounters with power would be unpleasant affairs. The book contains many instances of invocations that were meant to remedy the dangers to which ordinary individuals were exposed by those with political power. The following provides a grim example of this:

If they take a convict to the place of execution with the intent of killing him, and nothing can be devised to free him, let the invoker who recalls this name [?] devote his soul to it, purify his heart from all attachments to earthly and heavenly things, recite this name seven times, remove doubt and disbelief from his mind, follow the convict, and blow on him after every recitation. By the command of God Almighty the convict will be saved from death even if strong and powerful enemies be after him and even if the *qazi*s and the ʻulama [i.e. the jurists] had issued *fatva*s [legal decisions] (Muhammad Ghaws, *Javahir-i Khamsa*, fl. 150a).

It should be clear that the political reality of many of Shaykh Muhammad Ghaws' potential followers was rather dire.

As argued above, a great part of Shaykh Muhammad's message included an emphasis on miracles and visions. However the realm of the military sometimes intruded here as well. A good example of this was the Shaykh's vision of the planet Mars. In the *Javahir*, a number of passages detailed a direct encounter with the human forms of the seven planets, the sun, and the moon. For instance, during the recitation of a particular name, the moon would come down from the sky in the shape of a beautiful pre-pubescent boy [*amrad*], embrace the invoker, and ask him his desire. The invoker should say that he wants to see strange and wondrous things and not be tempted by all the gold and silver that the young boy would bring (Muhammad Ghaws, *Javahir-i Khamsa*, fl. 142).

The visit from Mars, however, would be quite another matter. At some point during the invocation, a loud tumult would be heard and then a frightening man, tall like a dome, short-tempered and bloodthirsty, black-eyed with a naked sword in hand, would come and sit in front of the invoker. He would move his lips in uttering something, but the invoker would not understand him. If the invoker showed the slightest fear, Mars would cut off his head immediately. But if the invoker continued with the recitation he would capture Mars, who would promise to kill his enemies (Muhammad Ghaws, *Javahir-i Khamsa*, fl. 152b-153a). In short the political aspects of Shaykh Muhammad's teachings even penetrated the visionary parts.

Now, having provided examples of the peculiarities of the Shattari doctrine and its distinctness from some others, one should note three significant characteristics. First, as stated above, scholars of the medieval period have understood the Sufi saint and the king as representing competing sources of authority, wherein the relationship between the sultan and the Shaykh could even be adversarial. The life of ʻAbd al-Quddus Gangohi demonstrates this pattern very well. But with Shaykh Muhammad Ghaws, the king and the Sufi saint joined hands in a mutual bid for power. It is certainly interesting how much the Emperor Humayun and the Shaykh had in common. Humayun, too, was remembered as overly cautious and respectful towards the names of God, being obsessed with astrology and omens. On the other hand, Shaykh Muhammad's astrology very much resembled the Mughal court's astrological practices at Gwalior, as represented by Khvandamir [1475-1535?]. At Humayun's court, each day of the week was color-coded based on its planetary sign, and the business of the day reflected the influence of the relevant planet (see the contribution by Grenet in this volume). While in late Sultanate India, usually Shaykhs of lower social standing engaged with royal patrons, Muhamamd Ghaws was a rather prominent Shaykh, and his role as the personal advisor of the Mughal Emperor signaled a new phase whereby competition was being ended and the two bases of power were joining hands rather tightly.

A second significance involves the direction of influence. Regarding the relationship between Sufism and the Mughals, the common scholarly consensus is that Indian Sufis influenced Mughal policy. Scholars have posited that the kind of "syncretic" proselytization undertaken by north Indian Sufis helped bridge the gap between Hinduism and Islam, ~~and this~~ in turn setting the stage for the Mughal policy of *sulh-i kull*, i.e. tolerance shown to Hindus (Alam 2004). In the case of the Shattaris, however, influence between court and Shaykh flowed in both directions and apparently did not overtly involve Hindu practices.

The third significant quality of Shaykh Muhammad's teachings is what one might call his "human-centric religion". For all its fascination with astrology and visions, Shaykh Muhammad's doctrine is centered on the individual practitioner, in the sense that, while the power associated with medieval shaykhs like Nizam al-Din Awliya or ʻAbd al-Quddus Gangohi was fundamentally unachievable and mysterious, insofar as it was predestined by God, the power of Shattari doctrine was open to all. Anyone might join the group, follow the special instructions, and achieve the same uniform results.

A re-examination of the history of the Mughal state is also certainly worthwhile. To date it is commonly believed that the Mughal elites' serious engagement with South Asian religious traditions was initiated under Emperor Akbar. However, many scholars have long argued that this process began much earlier. As early as 1938, S. K. Bannerj, for instance, already stated that under Humayun a distinct Mughal culture was founded that was "cosmopolitan and assimilative" (Banerji 1938, 157). Eva Orthmann has made this argument much more forcefully; she further found that the origins of Akbar's religious practices actually originated in his father Humayun's time (Orthmann 2010, 202-220). The relationship with the Shattari brothers supports this.

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HISTORIAN AS WITNESS: GHULAM HUSAIN TABATABAI AND THE DAWNING OF BRITISH RULE IN INDIA[1]

Sudipta Sen

To write one's diary is to place oneself temporarily under the protection of everyday time—
Maurice Blanchot[2]

The well-known French literary critic and philosopher Maurice Blanchot once wrote that the diary as a form of writing, which allows the author so many freedoms, is still subject to an incontrovertible law. However trivial this law may appear at first glance, the diary and the diarist must obey the laws of the calendar. The inevitable regularity of day-to-day entries demands a certain measure of conformity on the part of any author. In a similar vein, we might propose that the historian of yore, who is essentially a chronicler, is equally subservient to the dictates of time apportioned by the courtesy of the calendar. Chroniclers are not the sovereign guardians of time. They are bound as much by the narrative conventions of their craft as by the sequential logic of events unfolding along expected durations – days, months, years. Chronicles, one could argue, are ultimately made up of successive elements that contain fused aspects of language and time. In this regard, they still resemble the narrative craft of the contemporary historian in ways that have not been acknowledged fully.

In this essay, I explore how a close reading of a Persian chronicle from late Mughal and early British India might bring us one step closer to a measure of history with a distinctive temporal logic of its own. The text in question addresses two of the most consequential episodes in the history of the Indian subcontinent: the decline of the Mughal Empire and the rise of British rule. How does this text approach the subject of such a momentous political transformation while remaining true to its genre? Or does the unprecedented nature of the subject urge a qualitative shift in its texture? What is the relation between its notions of sequence and causality? In any historical chronicle, temporal sequence implies a degree of political and moral choice on the part of the author. At the same time, I also examine the extent to which this text recapitulates certain fundamental principles of a moral-political order that date much further back in time.

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The Historian as Observer

The chronicle in question is a signature account written during the emergence of British rule in India: Mir Muhammad Ghulam Husain Tabatabai's well-known and voluminous historical survey *Sair al Mutakhirin* in Persian, completed during the years 1779-1780. The title of the text may be loosely translated as the 'View of Recent Times'. The historical significance of this text, in my view, has not yet been fully realized. Husain is a historian and chronicler endowed with a very distinctive voice and discerning moral tone. There are certain textual gestures that most courtly chronicles of the Indo-Persian genre follow, and Husain's core text does not deliberately seek to flout these rules. Rather, as I suggest below, its finds its distinctive authorial voice through these very same devices.

The importance of Ghulam Husain's volumes as witness to the rise of British rule in India has been reappraised recently by authors such as Abdul Ghani Khan, Kumkum Chatterjee, and most recently by Partha Chatterjee (Khan 2000; Chatterjee 1998; Chatterjee 2012). It is fair to suggest that the discussion of Ghulam Husain's text has so far revolved around some fairly predictable themes. One is the persistence of a particular genre of writing exemplified by scholar-administrators of the Mughal Empire. Husain's tract in this regard has been seen as an appeal for a return to the virtuous principles of governance established by the architects of the Mughal Empire, written in the era of its final decline. Kumkum Chatterjee has argued, quite emphatically, that Husain was indeed an exemplar among scholar-administrators who embodied certain long-held values that had withstood the test of time and the incompetence of rulers. Such courtiers were expected to serve as conscientious custodians of the empire, cherished for their counsel and impartiality. On occasion they even ventured to chide the emperor for showing poor judgment. According to Chatterjee, they might have earned this right in return for the fidelity and service toward the "well-being" of the kingdom (Chatterjee 1998, 932).

Others have seen Husain's text primarily as one of the early indictments of British rule in India that sounded a warning about the arrival of colonial rule. Thus A. G. Khan describes it as one of the first accusations of the disruptive results of the East India Company's regime in India that reveals a degree of "ideological hostility" (Khan 2000, 285), It is the same kind of resentment and outrage, according to Khan that led to the first stirrings of rebellions among the Ruhela Afghans of Rohilkhand, the revolt of Raja Chait Singh and the *zamindar*s of Benaras, culminating in the resistance of Tipu Sultan and the Anglo-Mysore wars of the turn of the century. Partha Chatterjee has recently discussed this text as an example of a transitional, "early modern" phase in the writing of Indian history. Not only does it offer new perspectives on statecraft, or on the merits of decisive, princely conduct, or a search for effective political mastery in late eighteenth- century northern India, what appears to be a defense of traditional principles of Mughal rule, to quote Partha Chatterjee, "already contains the germ of something else" (Chatterjee 2012,83).

If it is indeed true that the *Sair* as a text bears certain definitive signs of what many historians following Sanjay Subrahmanyam are now claiming as belonging to a moment of early modernity dating back to the sixteenth century or even earlier, then perhaps we should not expect the arrival of British rule in India or the rise of the East India Company's new regime to have made such an epochal difference to its basic character or outlook (Subrahmanyam 1998, 99).[2] However, this is not necessarily the case. There are indeed many parts of Husain's history that address new and unprecedented events. At the same time, the bulk of his text reads very much like a traditional Indo-Persian historical chronicle. Given its composite and uneven character, I am not necessarily convinced that Husain's account merits the categorical distinction of an "early modern" account. In any case, this kind of periodization is not my primary concern in this essay.

The emphasis of my analysis lies on the stylistic and formal characteristics of Husain's Persian prose, especially on certain aspects of its rhetorical verve, which in my judgment demonstrate an intimate kinship with Indo-Persian historical texts of Mughal India. This is particularly true in the first two volumes of his review, where he recounts the last decades of Aurgangzeb's reign, and also the political unrest and rebellion that follow under his successors Bahadur Shah (1707-1712), Jahandar Shah (1712-1713), Farrukhsiyar (1713-1719), and Muhammad Shah (1719-1748). There are any numbers of passages here that are not only stylistically reminiscent of standard histories of this era, but pay active homage to past exemplars of the historical chronicle.

At the same time, especially toward the end of his long story when Husain introduces readers to the reign of the last independent rulers of Bengal such as Ali Vardi Khan or Siraj ud- daulah, or the British wars of conquest in Bengal (1757-1764), or the history of European conquests in the New World, there is a marked difference in his tone. Here the voice of the diarist and the contemporary observer becomes much more insistent. At times, Husain seems to write from sheer personal memory. In fact, it is not surprising that M. Raymond, Husain's principal translator in the very title of his English rendition of the text introduces him as "an Indian nobleman of high rank who wrote both as *an actor and*

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[2] Following Sanjay Subrahmanyam's (Subrahmanyam 1998, 99) stimulating discussion of the concept and periodization of the early modern there has been a plethora of writing on the subject. However, there is now a growing body of rejoinders to this idea of a trans-European moment of early modernity that cast some doubts on the uses and implications of the category itself (Starn 2002; Chakarabarty, 2011).

spectator".[3] On occasion Husain's voice is condemnatory, at times he betrays a surprising degree of *resentiment.* At the close of his account his moral censures become sharper, his most pointed barbs and witticisms reserved for those who peddle their honor for personal gain or wealth, especially Mir Jafar who betrays his young master on the field of battle to accept a new mandate from the East India Company. Husain is generally much more guarded on the character of individual officials of the Company, and this seems to be in keeping with his ties to the British administration, especially his service as an advisor to Henry Vansittart and the Provincial Council at Patna in the early 1770s (Tabatabai 1902, vol. 3, 198). In this regard, his incisive critique of the administrative lapses of the English and their failure to adapt to Indian conditions that appears towards the end of the third volume of the narrative seems to be set apart from the flow of the main text.

Whether the *Sair* marks a new turn in Indo-Persian historiography, or whether Husain is indeed prescient in his view of the social transformation brought about by colonial rule in India, are questions beyond the scope of this essay. Rather, my modest proposition here is that this is a remarkable body of work that deserves to be studied for its intrinsic literary and historical merit. In this regard, I suggest that it might be useful to think of Husain's account not as one text but many, and his authorial persona as unevenly manifest. Husain's *tableau vivant* spans more than two or three generations, over a time period during which the entire political landscape of India underwent unprecedented change and upheaval. Curiously, despite the range of symbols and expressions in Husain's epistolary arsenal, when it comes to the episode of British conquests, he seems somewhat reticent in judging the acts and decisions of individual officers of the Company who were responsible for bringing down the old order. Is this a sign of new loyalty or political circumspection? The answer is not clear.

The Indo-Persian Historical Chronicle

The most common designation for historical texts during this era was *tārīkh*, a term with a whole range of connotations: lunar month, date, era and epoch. It was used both in the singular and in the plural (*tavārīkh*), and sometimes in a combination of the two, e.g. *tārīkh-tavārīkh*. In the Indian context, the usage of the term *tārīkh* coincided to an extent with the introduction of the Hijri calendar by the first Muslim rulers of Delhi, and it eventually came to mean both history and the writing of history. The status accorded to historical wisdom derived in part from its association with theology and the transmission of other authoritative forms of knowledge. Over time, however, the purport of history became more secular, a source of lessons for matters belonging to the temporal dimension: the succession of empires and kingdoms and the lives and conduct rulers. History writing as a pursuit in medieval India retained its original kinship with dates and memorable events. In this sense, there was no fixed rule that separated different forms of literary endeavor: genealogy, chronicle, diary, biography or even courtly record. History was a discipline, a lesson, and in many ways art and science in tandem (Sen 1999, 233). Seen from this larger perspective, there is little doubt that Ghulam Husain saw himself, above all, as a chronicler *and* a historian.

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[3] The translated text of the Sair ul Mutakherin that I refer to throughout this essay is the edition that was printed in Calcutta in ca. 1902. See *A Translation of the Seir Mutaqherin; or, View of Modern Times, Being a History of India, From the Year 1118 to the year 1194 of the Hedjrah, Containing, in General, the Reigns of the Seven Last Emperors of Hindostan, and in Particular, an Account of the English Wars in Bengal... the Whole Written in Persian by Seid Gholam Hossein Khan*, Calcutta: Pinter T. D. Chatterjee, [1902]. The dedication referred to above appears on p. 7 of this edition. Italics are mine.

Nevertheless the question remains: to what extent can we describe parts of this text, which contain Husain's personal observations on the contemporary affairs of state, as compatible with other histories composed during this time? After all Husain does not call his account a *tārīk̲h̲* or *tav*ārī*k̲h̲*. Instead, he calls it a *sair*, which is an Arabic word assimilated in Farsi, literally meaning "travel" and by extension therefore a tour, ride or a walk, and by implication thus also a view or a spectacle.[4] In both Hindustani and Farsi usage, *sair raftan* is to walk and behold, *sair namūdan* is to travel, and *sair kardan* is to navigate. *Mutāk̲h̲irīn* (var. *mutāk̲h̲k̲h̲irīn*) relates to the word *āk̲h̲ir* – last, ultimate, latest. It is possible to translate the expression *mutāk̲h̲irīn* here as contemporary, denoting not just time but also people: thus not just a view of recent times but literally a view of "the contemporaries", people and events.[5] The title suggests a first-hand account, implying a certain measure of directness and intimacy. John Briggs, who translated a portion of the text thought that it was primarily "written in the style of private memoirs" (Briggs 1832, iv). Husain's title therefore, *a view of recent times*, thus seems fairly precise, at least from an etymological perspective. Despite the fact that there are many sections of this text that rely on reminiscence rather than a public record of past events, the broad sweep of Ghulam Husain's sketch of historical events follow the basic patterns of annalistic history established in India since the period of the Delhi Sultanate. These were commonly modeled on Arab historical chronicles and their chronographic schemata based on the *ṭabaq̲*āt form, that is, the recounting of events arranged along a certain designated number of years, typically ranging from ten to forty (Rosenthal 1968, 83). This distinctive form became the standard in Indo-Persian history writing after the *Tabaqat-i Nasiri* compiled by Minhaj-i Siraj Juzjani in 1260 AD, which is arranged into twenty three successive annals.[6] The annalistic form recognized the value of cumulative wisdom wherein eyewitness accounts of a previous period becomes the accepted content of later historical treatments. In this respect Ghulam Husain's notion of the historian as witness does not seem to be at odds with the spirit of the *ṯabaq̱āt-tavārīḵẖ* genre of texts, except for the fact that at times he seems to insinuate himself deliberately into his own narrative. The *Sair* is perhaps a richer text for this liberty. At times, Husain's voice is indeed intuitively close to lived experience. It seems to move seamlessly between recorded history and historical memory. Most importantly, he is not afraid to pass decisive moral judgments on the protagonists of history.

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[4] Thus Hindustani (Urdu) and Persian *masīr* (infinitive noun of *sair*): going, walking, proceeding on a journey etc.

[5] I am grateful to my colleagues Baki Tezcan and Ali Anooshahr for suggesting this particular implication.

[6] The word *ṭabaq̲*āt in Persian has a range of meanings. In this particular form of usage it refers to a compilation of stories, annals, or a succession of events, thus also by implication, history. Some scholars have translated *ṭabaq̲*āt as successive "layers". See Iqtidar Husain Siddiqi's *Indo-Persian Historiography Up to the Thirteenth Century* (Siddiqi 2010, 92-93).

Persian historical chronicles in India were not only predicated on a cyclical perception of the world and the vicissitudes of fate, they were also suffused with the idea that the study of the past was a salutary exercise in moral pedagogy. This idea was most eloquently expressed by one of the exemplars of the historian's craft in medieval India, Ziya al-Din Barani (1284-1356 AD), who wrote in the preface to his *Tarikh-i Firuz-Shahi* that his study was not only an account of kings, or a text on law and governance, but also a source of precepts and advice for future rulers following the basic tenets of Islam (Nizami 1968, 37-39). History in this sense was much like what Cicero called *magistra vita*: a repository of knowledge about heroic deeds, virtuous actions, probity of character (*avṣāf-i buzurgī*) and ethical conduct (*aḵẖlāq*) (Sen 1999, 236). The historian's discernment lay not just in the analysis of events and their causes, but in the elicitation of their underlying moral significance. Such a moral vision of the historian's task can be traced all the way to the universal templates established by Muslim scholars such as al-Tabari dedicated to the ultimate unfolding of divine will in the course of human affairs.[7] Barani who modeled his *Tarikh* on the work of his illustrious predecessor Minhaj Siraj Juzjani (b. 1193), articulated the didactic and compilatory task of history succinctly in his homage to the *Tabaqat-i Nasiri*, stressing the importance of the historian as a *m'uallif*, or a compiler of texts, one who must take into account the cumulative weight of histories and historians that have come before him (Nizami 1974, 296). It was expected of the historical chronicler to acknowledge these lessons drawn from the past record of human conduct and character.[8] Ghulam Husain's text, although composed many centuries later, bears a strong resemblance to these earlier histories in its gestures of piety and moral solicitude. It reminds us that the scribes and scholars who were the custodians of historical memory in later Mughal India did not necessarily see themselves as removed in time and space from Mughal and pre-Mughal textual traditions, and viewed the writing of history as a means of establishing a direct link to a past stretching back to Ghurid or even the Ghaznavid times.[9]

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[7] On al-Tabari's *Universal History* see H. A. R. Gibb, Arabic Literature (Gibb,1963, 58). Before he published his *History*, Al-Tabari was primarily known as a scholar of Islamic jurisprudence for his commentary on the Quran (Rosenthal 1983, vol. 1, 44). Rosenthal also provides an useful discussion of good and evil in human affairs as part of divine predestination (199-200). On the impact of Arab scholars on Persian historiography that came to fruition under the Samanid and Ghaznavid patronage in Central Asia and Afghanistan see Siddiqi, Indo-Persian Historiography (Siddiqi 2010, 7-8).

[8] Barani was also influenced by the other Ghaznavid historian Abul Fazl Bayhaqi (995-1077 AD), whose history is known for its censure of individuals and public affairs. On Bayhaqi's religious and moral outlook and its relationship to his historical thought see chapter two of Ranin Kazemi's thesis, *Morality and Idealism: Abu'l-Fazl Bayhaqi's Historical Thought in Tarikh-i Bayhaqi* (Kazemi, 2005).

There is much to be learnt from the formal aspects of Husain's prose, especially from the way he juxtaposes recent history with events long past. As we move forward in time through the years of the long decline of the Mughal Empire, and the text moves from one political debacle to the other, Husain's view of the moral crisis of the empire becomes clearer. Weak emperors precipitate internal coups, strife and fighting among nobles, and these in turn are made worse by outside invasions. It is also worth considering Husain's conception of what might constitute a true political exigency. Does his view of the unraveling of the Mughal order and the seizure of power by the Company in Bengal offer a different theory of political crisis beyond the usual adages of *fitnā* and *fasād*? What kind of a glimpse does he offer us into the making of history itself as a form of remembering to mark the passing of an old order? Answers to these questions might give us some clues to Husain's political vision. His moral judgments are not simply a testament of his aristocratic temperament or personal quirks. They are, I think, much more indicative of the pressing moral concerns of his particular generation and social class.

The uneven nature of this text also raises certain questions about Ghulam Husain's notion of historical veracity. While his translator Raymond provides copious footnotes for Husain's observations, the text itself says very little about specific letters or documents and their dates. When he does mention a letter or a document that he saw, he assures the reader that he saw it with his own eyes, or heard about it from a trustworthy source. In Husain's day and age, documents did not circulate freely in the public domain. In this regard, Husain is not an archival historian in the contemporary sense. Some idea of what an "archival" collection in eighteenth- century India might have looked like may be formed by looking at the word *muḥāfiẕkhāna* – a place of "safe-keeping" or a record room – where letters, deeds and revenue rolls were jealously guarded.[10] We also have to keep in mind that Husain was writing about events of enormous political consequence and sensitivity. In this context, it might be worth asking to what degree he was aware of the wider reception of his text. Since the manuscript was presented formally to Warren Hastings, we might surmise that his notion of an audience must have included the officials of the East India Company. When Husain finished his book, he was back in his native city of Azimabad (present-day Patna) where he began his career. Husain's primary audience was the small circle of elite families in Patna and Calcutta. His claims to truth were thus not based on some abstract notion of archival verity, but on his own social standing and personal honor.

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[9] On this see Muzaffar Alam's essay, "The Culture and Politics of Persian in Precolonial Hindustan" (Pollock 2003). More recently Muzaffar Alam and Sanjay Subrahmanyam have viewed this as a process of assimilation into the Indo-Persian "republic of letters" which was well and alive during the eighteenth century (Alam and Subrahmanyam, 2012, 411).

[10] This term was assimilated into British-Indian administrative parlance. In Bengal "Mohafez Khana" was the official term for the colonial Record Department where documents were preserved against humidity, white ants and other insects. See for example the description of record rooms in the courts of Lower Bengal in reports published in the *Calcutta Review* (January-June 1854, Vol. XXII).

Life and Times of Ghulam Husain

Ghulam Husain's ancestors were originally from Iraq. His father Hidayat Khan accompanied the Nawab of Bengal Ali Vardi Khan in the 1740s to Azimabad (Patna) where he was appointed as the Subadar (governor), eventually assuming the charge of that city and its environs. Husain, thus began his career amidst a close circle of subordinate officials in charge of the day to day administrative affairs of a key province on the eastern flank of the old Mughal Empire. Husain was roughly a contemporary of Robert Clive. His experience in assisting Mughal officers in Bihar and Bengal attracted the notice of Company officials looking for capable natives of good standing. He served under Major Carnac, and he also worked as a translator and scribe for General Goddard. In other words, Husain not only saw, but was directly involved in the change of guard that took place at the top echelons of the revenue administration in Bengal with the advent of Company rule. He had the first-hand opportunity to observe the lives of British factors who were learning to take on the management of revenue collection for the first time in India.

This fact alone gives him a unique perspective among his peers. Husain's account thus is not written from the point of view of an outside observer, but from the perspective of a high-ranking member of the administrative service in Bihar and Bengal. During his long stint of duty, Husain had served in the administration of both the puppet Nawabs installed by the English on the throne of Bengal, Mir Jafar Ali Khan and Mir Qasim Ali Khan. Husain not only witnessed the rebellion of Mir Qasim, he took part in Major Carnac's extensive campaigns against the Mughal Emperor Shah Alam, when the latter decided to join forces with Qasim and the Nawab of Awadh Shuja-ud-daulah. Given the nature of this involvement, there is no simple way to determine Husain's true sentiments vis-à-vis the British.

This much is clear, however, that Husain's rhetoric is integral to his righteous stance, and that his moral injunctions carefully aligned with literary conventions. Husain's decisive, authoritative tone is reminiscent of Mughal scholar-administrators of an earlier era, whose aristocratic demeanor must have endured through the early period of the East India Company's rule in Bengal and northern India. Penmanship, calligraphy and literary grooming during this era were still the preserve of a particular section of the privileged elite, and a fundamental aspect of Indo-Persian courtly culture. Husain's text is copiously strewn with verses—selected from the standard work of poets such as Sadi and Hafiz—that appear from time to time between historical passages. These are the essential literary mnemonics of the time that are integral to the literary appeal of Husain's history.

There are terms and usages in this text that are notoriously difficult to render into English, not least because of our own predilections about what a standard historical survey from this era should look like. In this respect the *Sair al Mutakhirin* ought to be studied along with other Indo-Persian chronicles from Bengal from the same period. Such texts—mostly intended as literary gifts for the pleasure of benefactors—share a familiar rhetorical pattern of obsequy in the guise of tributes to their patrons, sometimes obvious, sometimes subtle. There are two historical accounts that closely fit this description, written around the same time as the *Sair*, and presented to the two most highly ranked native officials employed by the East India Company. One is Karam Ali's *Muzaffarnama*, written in honor of Naib Nazim Reza Khan, the man in charge of revenue collection in Bengal during the great droughts and famine of 1770-1771. The other is Kalyan Singh's *Khulasat-ut-Tawarikh* dedicated to the memory of his father, Raja Shitab Rai, another stalwart intermediary of the British revenue administrative setup in eastern India. Compared to these texts Husain's *Sair ul Mutakhirin* stands out clearly in its open criticism of the British government in India. In many respects the greater freedom with which Husain writes about the follies and foibles of rulers and officials, both past and present, has to do with his particular upbringing and background that I have sketched above. Like many members of the old guard who once served the Nawabs of Bengal, and afterwards had to swear allegiance to the East India Company's new regime, Husain's political sympathies are appropriately veiled and hard to pinpoint.

Husain's critique becomes much more stringent when he begins to enumerate the negative consequence of British rule in Bengal. Here, he seems to be commenting on the political future of his country rather than its past. However, his marked disapproval of the revenue administration of the East India Company does not necessarily imply that he perceived the coming of British rule in India as the most definitive crisis of his lifetime. It is possible that he saw the Company's territorial gains simply as one more act played out on the political stage of eighteenth-century north India against the backdrop of the atrophy of Mughal power and legitimacy. As I have indicated before, Husain notes in great detail a long succession of disruptive events: the invasion of Nadir Shah and the humiliating capitulation of Emperor Muhammad Shah, the march of the Afghans under Ahmad Shah Abdali and the temporary Afghan occupation of Delhi. Since Husain lavishes a great deal of time and attention to these critical political events of the long eighteenth-century, the debacle of Plassey in 1757, or the defeat of Emperor Shah Alam and Nawab Shuja ud Daulah at Buxar in 1764, do not seem appear in his writing as the decisive markers of a political transition. Although he is impressed with the superior military skills of the English, and tries to grasp the extraordinary nature of the political coup in Bengal brought about by a mere group of traders, it would be unfair to endow Husain with a foreknowledge of the eventual incorporation of India into the wider British Empire following the conquest of Bengal.

When Husain does use terms that we might translate as 'revolution' (*inqilāb*) or abrupt political change, or when he indicates the signs of unrest and trouble that have sapped the moral strength and political will of the indigenous ruling classes, he seems to hold the East India Company's officials serving in Bengal to the same standards by which he holds the indigenous aristocracy responsible for the decay of statecraft. Husain speaks of the English as woefully unversed in the ways and manners of the country, and insists that they must listen with patience and learn from the pleas and demands of the new subjects that they have chosen to govern. Husain seems to be suggesting that there ought to be a new covenant between ruler and the ruled, master and servant, patron and dependent. At the same time, Husain seems quite ambivalent about the distinction between political power rightfully inherited or earned and authority usurped by sheer force.

A Definitive Translation

The English translation of Husain's text by a freelance scholar of French descent, M. Raymond, was dedicated to the Governor General of Bengal, Warren Hastings (Tabatabai 1902, vol. 1, 9). Raymond also took care to append one of his personal letters addressed to Hastings in his preface expressing his admiration for Hastings and his regret that Hasting's contribution as Governor General to the improvement of British rule in Bengal has not been given its fair due: "I have been enjoying you, honorable Sir," writes Raymond, "with that reverential awe and that high admiration that you have impressed all Hindostan with". According to Raymond, Hastings was the only European who received the genuine affection of the natives of India (Tabatabai, vol. 1, 11).

The first edition of Raymond's translation was printed in Calcutta in the year 1788, and the three volumes were quickly shipped to London to be used as evidence during the Hastings's impeachment. However, the books were lost during the voyage. This was not a text that was widely available. In 1802 no more than two copies would have been circulating in London (Khan 2000, 280). One of these would later be donated to the Asiatic Society by its founder, Sir William Jones. The book then was reprinted in four volumes as *The Seir Mutaqherin* attributed to a 'Nota Manus' (another pen name for Raymond) in Calcutta, during the year 1789.The *Sair* became a much sought-after text after its translation became known. Commended by Macaulay, James Mill, and H. H. Wilson, it quickly became a standard reference. Although both William Jones and Colonel John Briggs attempted to translate parts of the text, in many ways, Raymond's translation and framing of the text gave it its definitive status over decades to come. To this end, I find Raymond's long preface and his footnotes exceptionally instructive in judging the reception of Husain's text.

M. Raymond, who has been described by his contemporaries as a "French Creole" and also a "French renegade" was a contemporary of Husain (Tabatabai 1902, vol. 1, 1; Ethé 1903, vol. 1, 140-141). He allegedly converted to Islam, and taking the name of Hajee Mustapha, lived in Bengal for the greater part of his life. In the translator's preface, Raymond notes the unlikely circumstance of his role in the transmission of the *Sair-al-Mutakhirin*, and submits humbly that he does not have "the honor to be an Englishman, and is far from being a Persian" (Tabatabai 1902, vol. 1, 1). Raymond is keen to provide a close and faithful translation, but he is also aware that Indians easily succumb to embellishments of truth for dramatic effect. Generally, Indians are deficient in their character, indifferent and ungrateful:

> In a sojourn of more than thirty years in India, and in particular in Bengal, I have obliged, assisted, relieved, an infinity of Indians and other Asiatics, made the fortune of some, and I have never met with any other return than perfect indifference or the blackest ingratitude (Tabatabai 1902, vol. 1, 3).

Given such an approach, it seems that M. Raymond took certain liberties with his translation. This becomes clearer as he accuses Ghulam Husain of nursing a deeply held patriotic nationalism common to the native subjects of British India. The British, Raymond observes, are contemptuous of the Indians as a "national body". However, this is a serious mistake.

> But beware! That national body is only motionless, but neither insensible, nor dead... There runs through our author's narrative, a subterraneous vein of national resentment, which emits vapours now and then, and which his occasional encomiums of the English, can neither conceal nor even palliate (6).

Having cast Husain in the company of vengeful Indians who harbor nothing but a vendetta against their English conquerors, so that they can redeem their lost freedom, Raymond then proceeds to sound an even more dire warning:

> The Indians then have been a more dangerous nation than they seem to be now. They may be in a slumber; but they may awake, and they deserve a more watchful eye than the English government seem to think (14).

It is possible to suggest then that Ghulam Husain's view of the British affairs in Hindustan that seems to have caused a degree of consternation among British administrators might have had something to do with the rhetorical and political stance of his principal translator.

Raymond must have been aware of the political fallout from the publication of his volumes, especially given the fact while he was translating this text, a public controversy had been swirling around Warren Hastings and his two main detractors, Philip Francis, member of the Governor General's Council and a high ranking official in the revenue department, and an army officer, General John Clavering, who had publicly accused Hastings of financial extortion and political corruption.[11] Francis initiated a public inquiry into the abuses of the Company administration in Bengal, and Hastings allegedly thwarted it. This was the beginning of a rivalry and political struggle that lasted for twenty one years. Francis became Hastings's *bête noire* and one of the prime movers behind his parliamentary trial (O'Brien 1994, 274). There is no doubt that the translation of Husain's manuscript created a stir among some members of the Governor General's Council. They recognized this as a significant testimony, which is perhaps why it was commissioned immediately by Hastings who was "anxious to have it translated into English" (Tabatabai 1902, vol. 1, 1).

Raymond's tendentious castigation of the Indian character, exaggerated by his desire to impress the officials of the East India Company with the political value of Husain's manuscript, suggests that his book was intended to have a sensational effect. This is not to say that Raymond's labor is without its merits. His translation is generally faithful to the original, and at times painstakingly literal. At the same time, however, in Raymond's rendition, Husain comes across as overtly verbose and ornate. I do not have the space here discuss at length the underlying hermeneutics of Raymond's English prose, or his overall attempt to capture an imagined Oriental flair and excess in Husain's phrases that obscures at times the direct simplicity and eloquence of Husain's style. It is worth pointing out here that despite the fact that no historian of the eighteenth century India would gainsay the historical value of the *Sair*, it has never been retranslated since Raymond's time. In the passages that follow, I have taken the liberty of translating anew a few select passages. Even in this brief exercise I am struck by Husain's reasoning, sophistication and the clarity of his moral vision, not to mention the persuasive elegance of his Persian.

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[11] For a succinct summary of this controversy see Robin Theobald, "Scandal in a Scandalous Age: The Impeachment Trial of Warren Hastings, 1788-1796" (Garrard and Newell, 2006, 141-143)

The Passage of Historical Time

The opening passages of the *Sair* are graceful, dense and stylized. Sifting through Husain's composition, one finds certain distinctive ideas of the movement of time, historical duration, and the magisterial sweep of history.[12] The historian is obliged to stand witness and give evidence (*adā'i shahādat*) and record the changes from one era to the next (*tabdīl-i auẓā' va aṭ*wār) and of this ever-changing world (*bū-qalamūnī rozgār*).[13] The world itself is a manuscript (*ṣaḥā'if-i rozgār*), a veritable record-book of days and nights (*dafātir-i lail-o-nahār*). It tells us about the various ranks and stations of men (*tafāvut-i ṭabaqāt-i adam*). Husain's humble task is to convey the accumulated wisdom of the written word (*dānishvarī muḥarrar*) that has been passed down faithfully from eminent writers of the past. The account of the scribe (*zabān-i mutāṣaddī*) is valuable both as a history (*bayān-i naql*) and a testament of the events and affairs of those who have come before (*bayān-i aḥvāl pishīnyān*). It is the scribe who holds together the delicate thread that connects the present generation to the records and relics of bygone ages (*sar risht-i akhbār-i a'ṣār va azmān*). In other words, the apparatus of truth rests on the faithful rendition of what has been already written down, and even more importantly, on what has been committed to memory by the virtuous and the worthy. There is no fundamental distinction here between history and the recollection of past events.

This basic experiential premise of Ghulam Hussain's approach, which by far is the defining aspect of his *mentalité*, makes it difficult to judge his text on simple notions of objectivity or bias. His approach, curiously enough, is not altogether different from what Leopold Von Ranke encapsulated in his famous and much debated dictum on what history was really about: "*wie es eigentlich gewesen*" —how things actually were. In Husain we see this unfold literally, especially when he states that he tried to capture *what he saw and what he heard.* In Husain's world, the diligence of the historian and the assiduousness of the scribe are closely aligned. The historian's duty is to assemble the strings of events that have taken place. He must narrate them exactly as they took place, as precisely as possible. He must not be misled by personal envy or sympathy. And while he asks his readers to forgive his mistakes, he promises them the sincerity of his search for the unblemished truth (*Sair*, 1779-80, vol. 1, folio 2)

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[12] I am indebted to my colleague Ali Anooshahr for his help in teasing out some of the more subtle nuances of these opening passages. In the English translation of the work discussed above, these passages have been taken from the translation of Sir William Jones, which are condensed and in some places do not correspond closely to the Persian original. "This elegant and poetical translation", writes Raymond, "is of the learned and ingenious William Jones, who, by correcting three words in the original manuscript, put it in the translator's power to understand the text" (Tabatabai 1902, vol. 1, 23).

[13] The text here is Ghulam Husain Tabatabai, *Sair-ul Muthakhirin,* vol. 1, folio 2 (colophon 1779-80). For this study I have used the original copy of Ghulam Husain's manuscript at the British Library. For details see C. Rieu, *Catalogue of the Persian Manuscripts in the British Museum* (Rieu 1966, vol. 2). The catalogue entry for the two volumes discussed here are as follows: ADD 5634 and ADD 6577. There are at least three surviving transcripts of this manuscript. The date of publication noted by Ethé is 1781.The text was first edited in 1832 by Abd-al Majid (Ethé, 1903, 141).

There are many ways that one can describe such a text: a history, a chronicle, or simply an empirical account of people and events that the author saw, or took part in. Husain's approach is lively, pithy and candid, and his history reads like an eyewitness account furnished with copious factual and observational detail. Even the noted imperial historiographer H. M. Elliot not known for his admiration of Indian histories, observed that "the author treats these important subjects with freedom and with a force, clearness and simplicity of style very unusual in an Asiatic writer (Elliot and Dowson 1877, 185) John Briggs, who republished a translation of a first volume of the text, also spoke favorably of it as providing an unique "insight into the events that caused a downfall of the Mahomedan power" (Briggs 1832, iii-iv).

One of the most insightful philosophers of history, Reinhart Koselleck in a landmark essay on the relationship between conceptual and social history discusses the kind of limits language itself places on the writing of history. Koselleck points out that that history *in totum* is after all an impossible empirical exercise. Moreover, conceptually, the *totum* of social history cannot be mapped on to the *totum* of linguistic history (Koselleck 2002, 23). Historical facts are always embedded in language, spoken or written. To such extent, all history is linguistic history. I want to pause on this reflection because it helps frame the discussion of Ghulam Husain's history as a professedly "eyewitness" account. There is at least one element in common to every historian's pursuit, no matter what objective criteria by which we choose to judge. This element is difficult to define but easy to grasp: *experience.* To follow Koselleck, there lies an irreducible experiential element in all historical recollection from antiquity through now that surfaces in almost every historical account. The facts of birth, death, marriage, murder, along with the more complex emotive instances of love, fidelity and treachery continue to form the myth and poetics of recorded experience and memory. They enter the common currency of speech and language raw and *a priori*, before they are digested and assimilated within historical discourse. Thus for Koselleck, *actual* and *linguistic* representation cannot be realistically disarticulated from one another (Koselleck 2002, 27-28). Koselleck asks: how does one generation convey its particular experience to the next? The task is larger than even the discipline of history: "Only when, with the passing of older generations, the orally conveyed trace of recollection melts away, does writing become the primary carrier of historical imparting" (27).

In Ghulam Husain's account there is no *a priori* distinction between linguistic and empirical registers that might bear on his testimony and its claim to truth. Thus, in the interstitial space between history and recollection, things heard—or even overheard—ceaselessly re-enter the stratum of recorded experience. As Husain explains in the preface to his manuscript, the authenticity of his account lies in his own first-hand knowledge of events and the recollection of his verbal exchanges with persons of eminent rank (*nāqilān-i mu'tabar-i shanīda*) (*Sair*, vol. 1, folio 2). Here, stylistically, history and biography converge and recombine. In many sentences, he begins unceremoniously with the expression: *goyand-kih* – it is said that. Experience is after all what a man of advanced years has. And Husain had seen much in his lifetime. History shows us universal truths that are apparent to the intelligent and virtuous. They are discernible to those endowed with experience and acuity of mind.

There is also another layer of complexity in Husain's text, by the virtue of which time seems to move in different registers. Events of decisive significance are broken down into a number of smaller and more intense episodes: battles, coups, murders. Here the succession of events seems to stretch out the ways in which his readers might apprehend his account of the passage of time. At certain instances there also seems to be an absence of definitive caesurae between one epoch and the next; episodes that have already been recounted reappear from time to time. The history of the loss of sovereignty of the Bengal Nawabs resulting from prodigious lapses in judgment among the ruling class thus seems to recapitulate the older and longer saga of the loss of effective and enlightened governance in Mughal India since the end of Emperor Aurangzeb's reign. Similar and compelling stories of hubris and nemesis, rise and fall, thus acquire a cumulative effect. This is not to say that Husain does not show an appreciation for the precise sequence of happenings. In certain instances he provides a day-by-day account of incidents with pauses on every significant month, day and even hour. Ultimately, however, the value of such events lie in the examples they present, for Husain's history—as I have emphasized above—is in many ways a compilation of lessons from the past.

The Moral Compass of History

The outstanding virtue of the *Sair-ul Mutakhirin* is its moral stance. In his introduction, Husain tells us that this is an account of the succession of rulers, of different ranks of men, and of leaders and their conduct. It is also a warning about the consequences of misconduct, especially the insolence and oppression of rulers. Affairs of the state and of rulers provide a lexicon for the edification of men, giving us a valuable insight into the world, which after all is the creation of God. The overarching themes of Husain's text are honor, loyalty and disloyalty. The words related to salt, signifying fidelity, *namak-harām* and *namak-parvar* appear time and again in his writing.[14] The fall of Siraj-ud-daulah is a result of treachery, but it is also caused by the seeds of his own destruction sown by the young Nawab when he murdered and oppressed subjects without just cause. Siraj's fall therefore is not caused simply by the superiority of British arms or the strategies of a Robert Clive. In fact the defeat of the Bengal Nawabs and the coming of British rule in India is a direct consequence of the moral failings of the rulers of the country. Toward the end of his tract, Husain issues a fair warning to those who are now engaged in shameful and unworthy conduct, taking advantage of the confusion, and corrupting the new administration from within its own ranks.

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[14] See the use of the word *namakhārāmān* in the *Sair-ul Mutakhirin* (*Sair*, vol. 1, folio 143)

My view of Husain's preoccupations in this text have been influenced quite considerably by the editorial remarks of Maulavi Abd-al Karim, who was the compiler of an abridged versions of the *Sair-ul Mutakhirin* published in 1827 by the education department of the East India Company's government.[15] It is not surprising that Karim too, many decades later, insists that Husain's work should be seen as a prophetic treatise of great instructive value. In his introduction Karim calls it a history endowed with *foresight*, a mirror for events far away in the future: *āyina-i dūr-bīn*. Karim's comments are a testament to the innate resilience of a certain form of historical reckoning, where the significance of the present and the future are intimately tied to the past.

What is the abiding moral structure that provides the *axis mundi* of Ghulam Husain's voluminous history of "recent times"? Husain's ulterior concern with the moral conduct of individuals in positions of power is certainly open to debate. His indictment of weak and ineffective rulers such as the last Mughals, or of the poor choices made by protagonists who are otherwise worthy of his admiration – such as Ali Vardi Khan of Bengal or Shuja-ud-daullah of Lucknow – are integrally related to his vision of a just political order. For instance, Ali Vardi overlooked his grandson Siraj-ud-daulah's ignorance, excessive and violent conduct, temper and recklessness; he did not reprimand him, condoning his profligate behavior, thus laying down the conditions for his downfall. Siraj, in turn, did not redeem his manner. Drunk with power, he lost his good sense and wrongfully spilled the blood of kinsmen such as Shaukat Jang, and close courtiers such as Husain Quli Khan. Siraj's fall was thus predetermined, a recompense (*mukāfāt*) for his various misdeeds (*Sair*, vol. 2, fol. 160). All these turns of event, changes of fortune, rise and fall of regimes can be attributed to rewards and retributions ordained from beyond the world of ordinary mortals. However, the learned and discerning can read the signs of trouble and determine whether a political regime is unstable and headed for disaster. There is also a hint in Husain's account—especially in the final passages of his manuscript—that time has been thrown out of joint, and the whole social order cast into a state of turmoil. Another expression for this in Husain's palaver is *āzār-i khalq*: trouble, disorder, or affliction that blight human affairs during every epoch.

Stories change, but the structure of right and wrong persists in a divinely ordained world. This is true even during wars of conquest waged in northern India by the British, or during the disruptions in the administration of eastern India after the East India

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[15] The text in question is Abd al Karim edited, *Khulasah-i Siyar al Muta'akhkhirin*, which was published in Calcutta by the Education Press in 1827. I am grateful here to my student Hakim Naim for his help with the reading and translation of key sections from this abridged version of Ghulam Husain's text.

Company's acquisition of the custodianship of the revenues of the provinces of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa. The economic malaise of the new revenue order or the breakdown of the traditional modes of good governance can be ultimately explained by the frailty of human conduct and the moral depravity of people in positions of power and responsibility. Hypocrisy and greed are the ultimate engines of misdeed. In the case of Bengal, to quote Husain's commentator Abd-al Karim's formulation in the abridged version of the *Sair*, the English found an opportunity, because the Nawabs of Bengal were ultimately destroyed by "the avaricious nature of ill-wishers and hypocrites (*bad-khẉāhān va munāfiqān dar qālab-i-daulatk͟hẉāhī*)" (Karim 1827, 203).

Shades of Character

The *Sair-ul Mutakhirin* seems to revel in portraiture. Strengths and weaknesses of character in it are integral to the causes and effects of historical events. The two most compelling characters crafted by Husain are that of the short-lived Bengal Nawab Siraj-ud-daulah and his treacherous commander Mir Jafar who ascends the throne of Bengal after his death with the help of the English. Siraj and Jafar complement each other in this story. Here is one of the clearest examples of how Husain's moral concerns undergird his writing. It is worth exploring in this context two instances in this drawn-out drama: first, the avarice and treachery of Mir Jafar and his notorious son Miran, and second, the murder of Nawab Siraj-ud-daulah and the desecration of his body.

After the British recapture their fort and city of Calcutta, and General Mir Jafar literally flees from the British guns—whether out of sheer cowardice or because of his conspiracy with the English we are not told—and Siraj-ud-daulah realizes that his reign is possibly coming to an end. He and his entire family and courtiers are in mortal danger. As I have indicated above, Husain depicts the young Nawab throughout his account as hot-headed and susceptible to the flattery of sycophants. On the eve of the fateful battle of Plassey, at the crossroad of his life and reign, the young Nawab is full of remorse (*pashemān*). He asks his generals to forgive his past misdeeds. Here Husain employs the first person. Siraj says: "from now on I shall behave like a true Sayyid. I entrust my life and ask to you to preserve my honor (*jān va abrū-i mā rā nigāh dārand*)" (*Sair*, vol. 2, fol. 159; Karim 1827, 206) This moving speech has little effect on Mir Muhammad Jafar Khan, one of the generals of the Nawab's army, whose time has come, and he has spotted the opportunity (*qābū*) he had been looking for.

Husain's writing here importunes the reader for sympathy towards the young heedless Nawab, much like a protagonist in an unfolding tragedy. The young man knows that he is surrounded by deceivers but cannot find a way out, and he has no recourse from hypocrites who surround him (Karim 1827, 202, 205). He has no friends left (*bi-yār*). His own people, especially those who had served his father have all deserted him. As his end draws near, he realizes that he will not be spared, and he begins to despair of his own life (*az jān-i k͟hud māyūs gardīdah...*) (*Sair*, vol. 2, fol. 157). Ultimately, Siraj-ud- daulah is the victim of his own past mistakes. As Husain puts it, Siraj took the path of ignorance (*rāh-i nādānī*) and high-handedness (*ḥukm-rānī*), and thus was consigned to the road to adversity (*rāh-i k͟hushkī*) (*Sair*, vol. 2, fol. 160). This is his providence (*qaẓā*). Husain marks this with a hemistich:

Chun tīrāh shavad mard-rā rozgār
Hamān an kunad kāsh niāyid bakār (*Sair*, vol. 2, fol. 154)

When fate dictates the conduct of a man
Whatever he does comes to little use

Mir Jafar in comparison is quick, crafty and covetous. He conspires with the Nawab's enemies and with the British, deliberately offering advice that is misleading, and eventually deserting his ruler's side during the fateful skirmish that takes place in the garden of Plassey in 1757. Husain describes in some detail the scene on the final day of battle where Siraj-ud-daulah's loyal generals Mir Madan and Mohanlal are being blazed by the volley-fire (*top-andāzī*) of the Company regiments. Mir Jafar has not only strategically withdrawn his troops, but hoping for the defeat of Siraj (*k͟hẉāhān-i shikast*) stands at a distance with his confidants, enjoying the spectacle from afar (*tamāshā mi-namūdand*) (*Sair*, vol. 2, fol. 153). After he has won his prize, the throne of Bengal, handed over to him by the British, he seizes the treasury of Siraj paying off Clive and his henchmen. He plots the assassination of Siraj, and the murder of several women of the Nawab's *zanāna*. In all this, Ghulam Husain paints the portrait of Nawab Mir Jafar as a perfect wretch who has no right to be on the *masnad* of Bengal.

After Siraj has been deposed, Mir Jafar shows little care for the affairs of state, because he is either intoxicated with *bhang* (paste from leaves of the *Sativa indica*) or occupied day and night with luxuries and women, along with his equally dissolute son Miran. Thus immersed in a multitude of sinful pleasures Jafar neglects the finances of the provinces (Tabatabai 1902, 271). Husain takes great pains to describe Mir Jafar's rakishness and roguery (*tamāshā-bīnī va fawāḥish-talabī*), and his constant search for pleasures of the flesh (*Sair*, vol. 2, fol. 161). He also excoriates the son, Miran the tyrant (*sitamgar*), who not only plots murders at will, but rapes and plunders, and at one point arranges for the drowning of the daughters of the slain Mahabat Jang, one of his main political rivals (*Sair*, vol. 2, fol. 212). Is this a history, or simply a warning against depravity that comes with power? Is it possible to sift and distinguish between Husain's manifest prejudices against Nawab Mir Jafar and his son, and his attempt to recapitulate the sequence of events faithfully and fairly? It is important to remind ourselves here that Ghulam Husain himself was once in the pay of Mir Jafar, and his account of the reprehensible character of father and son runs contrary to the precedents of his cadre. It not only reveals his attempt to embellish the faults of the character he dislikes, but it also leaves him open to the charge of his own betrayal of a former patron. Despite the fact the he once served their family, Ghulam Husain does not give Mir Jafar or his son a shred of dignity.

My second example of Husain's ethical stance is his fastidiously detailed account of the killing of the deposed Nawab Siraj-ud-daulah by Muhammadi Beg, carrying out the order of Miran, Mir Jafar's son (*Sair*, vol. 2, fol. 170). For Hussain this is one of the most shameful deeds in the annals of the history of Bengal, shocking in its disregard of both honor and custom. Not only the murder of Siraj, but the sheer ignominy of the manner in which his bloodstained body was strung on the back of an elephant and paraded through the public thoroughfares of Murshidabad, stands out for Husain as examples of the vilest kind of conduct displayed by a ranking member of the Nawab's household.

Husain takes great pains to show how the young Nawab of Bengal was dragged out in the open and hacked to pieces. His corpse was flung on the carriage of an elephant, paraded through the streets, and taken to his mother's house to serve Jafar's vengeance. Husain, who has harsh words for Siraj's choleric temperament, misjudgment and depravity, crafts the narrative of his death with the dramatic sensitivity of a playwright. Listen to this passage where Muhammadi Beg stabs the young Nawab: *tīgh-i bi-darīgh kashīda ẓ arabāt-i chand bar jigar-i nāznīn-i u zad* (*Sair*, vol. 2, fol. 158). This translates closely to the following: "he drew the pitiless dagger and struck his beloved, delicate body". As he fell to the ground from the repeated stabs, Siraj asked his assailant to stop, because he knew that his end was near: *bas ast ke kār-i man tamām va intiqām ba-anjām rasīd.*

Not satisfied yet with this perfidious act, his assailants put his body on an elephant and sent it to his mother's house. Husain describes this episode in great detail: *lāsh-i u rā bar havdā-i filī andākhtah ba ṭaur-i tashīr dar tashīr dar shahr gardānidand* (his body was thrown on the caparison of an elephant and in the manner in which a felon's corpse is displayed, and paraded through the city). According to Husain, Siraj's body was treated worse than that of a common criminal or prisoner of war, whose slain bodies were on display for all to see. However, it is important to remember that the same treatment had been meted out to Husain Quli Khan, one of Siraj's political victims. The defilement of the Nawab's body was not entirely without precedent in the city of Murshidabad.

As Siraj's corpse was being carried on the elephant and through the streets and markets, drops of blood left a trail on the dirt. These drops are described by Husain as payback for the murder of Husain Quli Khan. The body was taken and made to rest for a while at the spot where Khan had been killed by his order. Thereafter, the elephant was taken through the bazaar to his mother's house so that the Begam could be shown the mutilated body of her son. As his weeping mother held her son in her hands, she was shown little mercy. They took the blood-stained body away from her by force, denying her the decency of a proper burial, beat her, and threw her back into the house. Why does Husain devote so much attention to these details, infusing his testimony with the poignancy of someone witnessing martyrdom? Later in his account, Husain tells us that the people who rejoiced at the slaying of Siraj-ud-daulah, those who thought that he was no better than a tyrant, soon came to regret their support of his assassination. This is because in comparison to Jafar Ali Khan, the Nawab who replaced him, Siraj was of a much nobler disposition, and despite his overweening nature and mistakes, he had been, after all, a legitimate ruler.

These pointed judgments are symptomatic of Husain's general concern about the past. History does not always wait for the condign retribution of miscreants who betray the trust of their charge and their covenant with the almighty. Some of Husain's most eloquent passages address these inequities of fate. However, in some rare moments providence *does* afford a glimpse of rightful comeuppance. Husain finds a perfect example of such justice in the accidental death of Mir Jafar's oppressive son Miran who was killed by lightning strike in Azimabad (Patna) where he had encamped by the river Ganga, during a thunderstorm. According to Husain, this was the wrath of god visited upon the scoundrel after he had imprisoned the two eldest daughters of Nawab Ali Vardi Khan, Amina Begam and Ghasiti Begam in Dhaka, and put them to death by drowning them in the river (Tabatabai 1902, vol. 2, 370-371). During their last prayers, it is said, the daughters of the Nawab, resigned to their fate, had asked for divine intervention so that their assailant could be struck down with a thunderbolt. Their prayers, it seems, were answered.

The lightning was an accident, but it was also brought upon by a remarkable configuration of events. Miran was sleeping in a tent secured by iron pins, which must have acted as conductors when lightning struck the open field. He was killed right in his sleep. When people found his body in the morning, the head of his bed had been incinerated, and his body pierced by the bolts, and he looked just as if he had been flayed by a mighty whip (Tabatabai, vol. 2, 365). Among bystanders who had gathered for the spectacle, there was also a holy man, who pointed out that somehow the thunderbolt had sought out the exact spot in that small tent where the sleeping man could be struck with such deadly force. For Husain, this was proof enough that Miran had indeed been smitten by the wrath of the divine. God had protected his people as he often did from tyranny, by sending forth his angel of death (*Sair*, vol. 2, fol. 213). The English who had been camped nearby later found his body and carried it out atop an elephant. They eviscerated the corpse and prepared it for burial, and put it on a boat down the river Ganga to Rajmahal to be finally put to rest. Folks who gathered for a last glimpse of Miran remarked that his body looked just like the body of the slain Nawab Siraj-ud-daulah, whose death seemed to have been finally avenged (Tabatabai 1902, vol. 2, 373).

Witness of a New Regime

Ghulam Husain's frank and insightful description of the abuses of power in the British governance in India, which appears as a separate section in the third volume of his, can now be seen in the light of these pervasive moral concerns. This list of complaints has been studied by many and there is little space here for a full exploration, but I shall provide a very brief summary. In his critique, Husain seeks to identify the causes of the confusion (*asbāb-i-ikhtilāl*) that he sees in the state of affairs in parts of India under British rule (*Sair*, vol. 2, fol. 363). This state of uncertainty is the principal cause behind the breakdown of the administration (*mūjib-i bi-niẓāmī*), the devastation of the countryside (*vīrān-i bilād*) and corruption (*kharābī*) of officials. It is important to consider that Husain is also writing in the context of the great Bengal famine of 1770-71.

Husain reasons that the British are alienated from the tradition of rule and patronage in India. This is not simply because they are outsiders, but because they are in essence merchants (Tabatabai 1902, vol. 2, 203-204). Merchants do not have the same kind of sumptuary obligations, charity or beneficence worthy of kings, and thus they are quite unlike Indian rulers of the past. They do not yield tax-free land to dependants or religious endowments. Soldiers in their service do not have large retinues. In other words, the English government in India does not provide adequate patronage or employment to its deserving subjects. More importantly, indigenous people to whom they have entrusted large shares of their day-to-day administration lack the probity of character to stem the corruption that had spread through all ranks of service. The new rulers do not have an emotional affinity with their new subjects (Tabatabai 1902, vol. 2, 191-192). Thus for Husain, the yoke of foreign rule had worsened an already endemic problem: the long-term moral decline of the indigenous aristocracy. Much like other narratives of declension in the long-eighteenth century in India, Husain's too is a lament of the loss of the finer craft of statesmanship. Towards the end of his narrative, he enjoins the Indian intermediaries to cease their infighting and petty struggles to try and gain the favor of the British rulers. The change wrought in public affairs cannot be undone, but Indians should make every effort to help the new rulers administer the country better. For Husain the fate of the country does not entirely depend on the conduct and acuity of the new rulers, Indian intermediaries have a meaningful role to play.

Reclamation of individual honor is Husain's fundamental remedy for such prolonged stasis. Political vicissitudes, economic debacle and even diseases and famine are the outward signs of a far deeper and more fundamental malaise. For the old, privileged classes in India, learning now to bury the legacy of the great Mughal Empire and acquiesce in the new era of British rule, this sense of wrong, and of affront to political honor, might have urged a new moral introspection before the enchantment and distant promise of latter day nationalism could be invented.

In what ways then can Husain's history be reconciled to the act of witnessing the past? It is worth considering that the term "witness" has more than one meaning in this context. First and foremost, in late Mughal India, it is a legal term. To stand witness in a court of law, especially in Indian renditions of traditional Hanafi law, imposes on the individual an obligation of objectivity and of seeing and remembering as acts of fidelity. Second, it is also tied to the notion of a final verdict, one's final reckoning face-to-face with both temporal and by implication, divine justice. I have argued that within the paradigmatic structure of Husain's moral exercise of history there is no ultimate distinction between observation and judgment, between individual experience and common wisdom that comes with age and experience. This is also the framework which enables him to reconcile the duration of historical events that take place within the purview of ordinary, mortal lives, to the more austere and impersonal measures of time beyond historical memory. These amplitudes and variations in the reckoning of time in Husain's panoramic history are not amenable to simple ascriptions of tradition or modernity. Such terms, in the end, do not really do enough justice to the finer poetics and politics of this remarkable text.

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PARSI TEXTUAL PHILANTHROPY: PRINT COMMERCE AND THE REVIVAL OF ZOROASTRIANISM IN EARLY 20TH-CENTURY IRAN

Afshin Marashi

Introduction

During the 1920s and 1930s the Zoroastrian community of Bombay came to play an increasingly active role in the cultural, political, and economic life of Iran. The growing influence of the Parsis in Iran—including their support for the newly established Pahlavi state's nation-building project—was premised upon a number of factors. First, by the early twentieth century, the Parsi intellectual renaissance of Bombay, which had itself gained increasing momentum since its inception in the early nineteenth century, had produced a vivid historical consciousness on the part of Indian Zoroastrians that Iran was the Parsi community's ancestral homeland (Ringer 2011, 142-162; Boyce 1979, 196-204; Tavakoli-Targhi 2001). Second, the great prosperity that the Parsis had achieved through their remarkable success in the textile and commercial economy of colonial Bombay had placed enormous resources at their disposal for purposes of philanthropy and investment (Dobbin 1970, 149-164; Dobbin 1996, 77-104; Hinnells 1985, 282-286). From the point of view of many investment and philanthropy-minded Parsi industrial barons of the early twentieth century, building cultural and commercial ties with their ancestral homeland seemed like a natural extension of Parsi enterprise. Third, the great prosperity of the Parsi community of India stood in sharp contrast to the fortunes of the Zoroastrian community remaining inside Iran. Those fortunes had long been in decline, both as a result of the more general economic conditions in Iran during the nineteenth century, and as a result of the added burdens resulting from the Iranian Zoroastrian community's minority status. Parsi philanthropists watching from Bombay were thus motivated to help alleviate the condition of their co-religionists inside Iran.[1] Finally, the growing Parsi connection to Iran was also enabled by technological changes of the early twentieth century. Steam-powered sea travel between Bombay and Persian Gulf port cities had become commonplace by the 1920s, moving regular cargoes of people and commercial goods (Green 2011, 125). Rail and road construction—as well as transport security— were likewise central pillars of the Pahlavi nation-building project, which in turn greatly facilitated commercial ties between the port cities of the south and the urban centers of Iran's interior (Clawson 1993, 239-246; Yaghoubian 1997, 1-36). It was these cultural, economic, technological, and infrastructural changes of the early twentieth century that enabled the growing contact between Bombay's Parsi community and the Iranian nation-building project of the 1920s and 1930s.

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[1] By the end of the nineteenth century the population of the Iranian Zoroastrian community had reached the brink of extinction, declining to approximately ten thousand members, mostly concentrated in the cities of Yazd and Kerman in central Iran. (Ringer 2011, 22; Jackson, 1906, 425).

One of the most important aspects of this growing relationship was the resources that were invested towards the publication of Zoroastrian-themed Persian-language printed books that were produced under Parsi auspices in Bombay and exported to the growing reading public inside Iran. The goal of this publishing effort was to promote a new awareness of Zoroastrianism among Iranian readers and the general public, dispel common prejudices about the faith held by many in the majority population, emphasize the compatibility of Zoroastrianism with the ethical values of modernity and the enlightenment, and most importantly, highlight the importance of Zoroastrianism as part of Iran's national history and cultural heritage. By the 1920s the newly established Pahlavi state had adopted Iran's classical past—including its Zoroastrian heritage—as the basis of a new official nationalism (Marashi 2008). Promoting a new state-sponsored national identity that emphasized this classical heritage became one of the principal activities of Pahlavi-era cultural policy. Books from Bombay, produced under Parsi sponsorship and intended for Iranian audiences, therefore became an important way for Parsi philanthropists to participate in the changes taking place in interwar Iran, and to assist the Pahlavi state in promoting the status of Zoroastrianism as part of a newly emerging national identity.

The Indian subcontinent had long been important to the Persianate literary tradition, and had been a center of Persian-language book production for centuries,[2] largely in the older manuscript traditions, but also increasingly in the newer nineteenth- century technologies of lithography and even typeset printed works.[3] It was, however, only in the early twentieth century—when industrialized forms of typeset book production combined with new efficient technologies of long-distance commercial exchange—that larger-scale networks of book production and circulation connecting Bombay and Iran became possible. These technological and commercial innovations may have enabled the larger-scale production and export of Zoroastrian-themed books from Bombay to Iran; however, the more important set of interests that compelled the Parsi book trade with Iran were not principally determined by market-driven considerations. In fact it is unclear if the still relatively high costs of typeset book production and long distance distribution could commercially justify the enterprise of books bound for Iran (Green 2010a, 321; Marzolph 2001, 14). By the logic of "print-capitalism" the Parsi book trade may have been a risky venture, especially for Parsi entrepreneurs who had honed their considerable commercial skills in the China trade.[4] Mill-spun cotton and tins of opium bound for China were seen as profitable commercial ventures, the selling of Zoroastrian books to Iran was, by contrast, an enterprise of an entirely different sort, which had to be justified on other grounds.

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[2] Muzaffar Alam and Sanjay Subrahmanyam have described this tradition as the "Indo-Persian republic of letters" (Alam 2010, 359).

[3] There is a significant literature on the history of Persianate printing (Green 2010a; Green 2010b; Babazadih 1999; Marzolph 2001; Floor 1990; Afshar 1966).

Rather than commercial interest, the interwar Parsi book trade with Iran was instead tied to broader goals of religious philanthropy— as well as what might be termed a "quasi-missionary" motive—intended to improve the poor social and economic conditions of the Zoroastrian community residing within Iran, as well to encourage the nationalist revival of Iran's classical heritage through the ongoing efforts of the new Pahlavi state. This practice of book production for purposes of religious and cultural philanthropy had roots in Bombay's nineteenth-century colonial history. As others have argued, the evangelical Christian presses of the nineteenth century had long used mass-production of inexpensive Christian-themed printed books in vernacular languages—what Leslie Howsam has called "cheap bibles"— to proselytize the indigenous communities of India, as well as throughout Asia, Africa, and the Americas (Howsman 1991). Mass circulating Persian-language printed books on Zoroastrian themes produced under Parsi auspices during the 1920s and 1930s were likely inspired by this practice of book production first pioneered by Christian missionaries. Instead of motives of "print-capitalism" the Parsi book trade with Iran can more appropriately be described as part of a tradition of textual philanthropy, which saw the printing, export, and distribution of books to Iran as part of a larger history of religious charity and cultural philanthropy on the part of Bombay Parsis towards their coreligionists within Iran and towards their ancestral homeland as a whole. Unlike their Christian missionary counterparts, however, evangelism and proselytism were never goals of Parsi-sponsored textual philanthropy. Nevertheless, the Zoroastrian-themed books bound for Iran were intended to promote a new understanding about Zoroastrianism that would help to elevate the status of the faith in the eyes of Iranians, and help bring Zoroastrianism into the center of debates surrounding Iran's national identity.

The books produced as part of this tradition of textual philanthropy were mostly published under the auspices of two important organizations: the Iran League and the Iranian Zoroastrian Anjuman (Patel 2008; Ringer 2011, 190-191; Jamaspasa 2012). Both of these organizations were based in Bombay and were involved in a wide range of charity activities. The Iran League was established in 1922 and was the successor organization to the Persian Zoroastrian Amelioration Fund, which had itself been established by the Petit industrial family of Bombay in 1854 for the purpose of sending charity to the Zoroastrian communities in the Iranian cities of Kerman and Yazd. In addition to its interest in book production, the Iran League, like its predecessor, continued the tradition of raising funds from the Parsi community of Bombay for the building of schools, hospitals, and orphanages for the Zoroastrian communities of Iran. The Iranian Zoroastrian Anjuman, which was established in 1917, had its focus on assisting the growing number of Iranian Zoroastrian immigrants who had made the journey from Iran to Bombay. As travel between Iran and India was facilitated in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the growing Iranian Zoroastrian population of Bombay and western India—who had come to be known by the moniker of "Irani"—became themselves the focus of charity on the part of Bombay's already established Parsi community, and were given assistance in the social transition to life in Bombay, including with respect to housing and employment (Hinnells 2005, 79-81; Kestenberg Amighi 1990, 129-137; Kulke 1974, 35).[5] Despite their slightly different areas of focus, both the Iran League and the Iranian Zoroastrian Anjuman cooperated towards the common goal of raising funds for the publication of Persian-language typeset printed books on Zoroastrian themes intended for export to Iran.

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[4] The centrality of profit is a key feature of most discussions of the early history of print technology (Anderson 1991, 38; Febvre 1991 [1958], 248-250).

Kaikhusraw Shahrukh and Bombay Textual Philanthropy

Between 1919 and 1939 these two Bombay-based Zoroastrian organizations were remarkably active in sponsoring and publishing numerous books on Zoroastrianism and ancient Iranian history intended for export to audiences inside Iran. Among the earliest of these Parsi-sponsored books is Kaikhusraw Shahrukh's (1875-1940) *Furūgh-i Mazdāyasnā* (*The Illumination of the Mazda Religion*), originally published in a 1909 Tehran edition, but then again in a 1919 Bombay edition produced through the auspices of Parsi textual philanthropy.[6] In the history of Bombay-based Iranian book production, Kaikhusraw Shahrukh's *Furūgh-i Mazdāyasnā* can best be described as a transitional work. It was not a book that was originally published under the direct sponsorship of the Iran League or the Iranian Zoroastrian Anjuman, nor was it a book that was written for the purpose of promoting the cultural policies of Pahlavi nation-building, having originally been written more than a decade before the establishment of the Pahlavi state. Likewise, unlike typeset books that became the mainstay of book production sponsored by the Bombay-based Zoroastrian organizations of the 1920s and 1930s, Shahrukh's work remained, in both its 1909 and 1919 editions, as part of the print tradition of lithography. Nevertheless, in a number of discernable ways the book bears the unmistakable signs of a work shaped by the milieu of the Parsi scholarly community of Bombay, as well as the growing tradition of Parsi textual philanthropy.

Kaikhusraw Shahrukh came into contact with the Parsi intellectual community during his time in Bombay, where he lived for at least one year sometime in the late

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[5] For a more general discussion of Parsi philanthropy see also Bulsara 1935.

[6] This work went through several editions during the twentieth century. See, Shahrukh 1909, 1919, and 1949. All three of these editions were in lithographed form. More recently the book was published in a 2001 typeset edition. See, Shahrukh 2001. This edition has significant changes in organization and content in comparison to the earlier editions. It has since been issued in five printings.

1890s, after having received his early education in Kerman, and his subsequent secondary education at the American missionary school in Tehran (Ringer 2011, 184-185; Shahrukh 1994, 2-4; Shahmardan 1961, 561-574). It was during his secondary schooling in Tehran, where Shahrukh excelled in the study of English, that he was encouraged to travel to Bombay to further his education. Shahrukh's time in Bombay was spent at the Jamshedji Jejeebhoy Madressa, one of the important Zoroastrian schools established in Bombay by the Parsi community of the nineteenth century (Shahrukh 1994, 4; Modi 1914, 477-483). Shahrukh's education in Kerman, Tehran, and Bombay proved a worthy foundation for his subsequent career. Following the victory of the Constitutional Revolution of 1905, he was elected to the newly established Majles, and spent the rest of his life as the principal Zoroastrian representative in the Iranian parliament. He also became an early supporter of Reza Shah, and played an active role in many of the subsequent cultural policies of the new Pahlavi state during the 1920s and 30s.

His *Furūgh-i Mazdāyasnā*, published after his initial election to the Majles— in a 1909 Tehran lithographed edition— is perhaps the first Persian-language text on Zoroastrianism that is rooted in the modernist intellectual tradition of the Bombay Parsi community. As Shahrukh details very clearly in the introduction to this work, he based his understanding of Zoroastrianism directly on the writings of the Parsis, as well on the writings of scholars from Europe and America that he came into contact with through Parsi intermediaries (Shahrukh 1919, 2). His intention in writing the book, he explains, was to bring to the attention of his Iranian readers the "new sciences" (*'ulūm-i jadīd*) regarding the faith that were then circulating among the scholars of Bombay, Europe, and America (Shahrukh 1919, 3). He goes on to say that very little was available in the Persian language that could help Iranians to become aware of a new intellectual movement underway among European, American, and Parsi scholars regarding a "true" and "certified" knowledge of Zoroastrianism, what he described in the introduction to the text as a "new awareness and understanding" regarding the faith (*bīnish va danish-i naw*) (Shahrukh 1919, 3). The goal of publishing the *Furūgh-i Mazdāyasnā*, he says, was to make these ideas available to readers inside Iran, as he states, "....in order that the new knowledge not remain useless" (Shahrukh 1919, 4). The substantive chapters of the book contain a combination of Shahrukh's own writings, which are in keeping with a modernist interpretation of Zoroastrianism, emphasizing its essential monotheism and compatibility with the moral and ethical teachings of the Abrahamic faiths. The 1909 and 1919 editions of the book also include short excerpted translations from Parsi, European, and American experts on Zoroastrianism.[7]

More important for the present discussion is not only the religious and intellectual content found in Kaikhusraw Shahrukh's *Furūgh-i Mazdāyasnā*, but rather the details that the book provides regarding the manner of its production and circulation. In the history of textual philanthropy emanating from Bombay to Iran in this period it is often difficult to detail the process of distribution and circulation of these texts. More often the content of the texts and the manner of their production are easier to document than are questions of how these books *travelled* or in determining *how they were read*. In the case of Shahrukh's *Furūgh-i Mazdāyasnā*, however, we are able to answer some of these questions through the aid of an important appendix that Shahrukh included in both the first Tehran edition of 1909, as well as the second edition of 1919 published in Bombay (Shahrukh 1909, 303-310; Shahrukh 1919, 299-304). In this intriguing appendix Shahrukh includes eight double-columned pages, after the main body of the book's narrative, listing the names of those whom he calls the book's "subscribers" (*mushtarikīn*) (Shahrukh 1909, 303; Shahrukh 1919, 299). These subscribers, he explains, are those who provided financial assistance used to cover the cost of the book's publication. The eight-page appendix consists of a list of names organized by the subscribers' city of residence, and by number of copies of the book sponsored through pre-purchase by each subscriber. In the 1909 edition of the *Furūgh-i Mazdāyasnā* the cities of Tehran, Isfahan, Kerman, Kashan, and Yazd are listed, and the total number of "subscribers" amounts to two hundred and seventy-five. The appendix also indicates the number of copies each subscriber pre-purchased, from a high of five hundred copies purchased by Arbab Jamshid Purbahman of Tehran, to the more common number of between 5 and 10 copies purchased by other subscribers (Shahrukh 1909, 303). The names of the subscribers in the 1909 edition also seem to indicate that most of the subscribers were members of Iran's Zoroastrian community, and some entries provide details indicating that the purchasers were connected to merchant houses (*tijārat-khānihs*) owned by Zoroastrian commercial families, principally from Kerman (Shahrukh 1909, 303). The cumulative number of copies produced in the 1909 edition, as indicated in this appendix, amounts to a total run of approximately two thousand five hundred lithographed copies, and unusually large number for a book published in the lithograph tradition. Some of these copies may have been purchased by subscribers for the purpose of resale, others were more likely distributed by these "patron-subscribers" to others within the Zoroastrian community, as well as to non-Zoroastrians free of charge, as part of the larger goal of spreading the new knowledge about Zoroastrianism among the reading public inside Iran.

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[7] The translated selections, which comprise the bulk of the text in the 1909 and 1919 editions, include excerpts from Dastur Jivanji Jamshidji Modi (one of the most prominent Parsi scholars of Bombay), Annie Besant (the principal organizer of the Theosophical Society in India), Lawrence H. Mills (Professor of Zoroastrianism and comparative religion at Oxford University), and Samuel Laing (a popular science writer of turn-of-the-twentieth century Britain). In the later editions of this work, these excerpted translations have been removed from Shahrukh's text.

The second edition of this important work—which is the Bombay edition of 1919—also includes a subscribers' appendix, and includes similar information about those who sponsored the publication of this edition. Clearly the Parsi community of Bombay had recognized the significance of Shahrukh's *Furūgh-i Mazdāyasnā* for disseminating new knowledge about Zoroastrianism inside Iran, and deemed this work worthy of sponsorship for a second edition. The Iranian Zoroastrian Anjuman of Bombay had in fact been formally established just two years earlier, in 1917, and saw charity and philanthropic activities, including book publication, as part of its mission.

The information included in the appendix of the 1919 edition reveals a number of important details. First, the 1919 Bombay edition was published in a substantially larger number, totaling almost twice the number of copies as the first Tehran edition, at just below five thousand copies. Additionally, the second edition confirms the great interest that was shown by the Parsi community in sponsoring the second printing of this text, with the vast majority of the "subscribers" of the 1919 edition listed as residents of Bombay. The list of subscribers in fact includes numerous names that will be familiar from the subsequent history of Parsi textual philanthropy during the 1920s and 1930s, names such as Peshotanji Marker, a prominent Parsi merchant from Bombay who would go on to sponsor the significant "Marker Avestan Series."[8] He personally sponsored two hundred lithographed copies of the 1919 edition of Shahrukh's *Furūgh-i Mazdāyasnā* (Shahrukh 1919, 299). Likewise, the name of Dinshah Irani, one of the key founders of the Iran League and the Iranian Zoroastrian Anjuman, and the author and publisher of numerous Perisan-language books on Zoroastrian topics, is also listed as a subscriber-patron of the *Furūgh-i Mazdāyasnā*; he sponsored twenty-five copies (Shahrukh 1919, 300).[9]

Other names on the list of *mushtarikīn* seem to indicate members of the successful Iranian-Zoroastrian expatriate community of Bombay. The number of Iranian immigrants to Bombay by the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries had reached significant numbers, especially Iranian-Zoroastrians from the cities of Kerman and Yazd.[10] The appendix to the 1919 edition lists numerous sponsors who were residents of Bombay with names indicating that they are originally from Iranian cities, such as Aqa Khudadad Gushtasb Kirmani, who sponsored the publication of three hundred copies of the work (Shahrukh 1919, 299). Numerous other Kermanis are also listed in Shahrukh's 1919 subscribers' appendix. Most significant of all, however, is the first textual evidence of the publishing activities of the "Iranian Zoroastrian Anjuman" of Bombay, which is listed in the appendix as the principal sponsor of the 1919 Bombay edition, with the pre-purchased sponsorship of five hundred copies (Shahrukh 1919, 299). The Iranian Zoroastrian Anjuman of Bombay went on— along with the Iran League— to participate in an extensive publication enterprise later in the 1920s and 1930s of producing books in Bombay that were bound for Iran. Their significant involvement in the sponsorship of the 1919 Bombay edition of the *Furūgh-i Mazdāyasnā* established an important precedent for these later efforts.

Kaikhusraw Shahrukh's *Furūgh-i Mazdāyasnā* is therefore significant for several reasons. Not only is it noteworthy for the eclectic content of new scholarship on Zoroastrianism, that it made available to Iranian readers perhaps for the first time, but it is also noteworthy as an indication of the increasingly deliberate and organized role played by the Zoroastrian community of Bombay in promoting the publication of Zoroastrian-themed books intended for audiences of Iranian readers. While the *Furūgh-i Mazdāyasnā* was merely a single text, it is nevertheless important as a significant foreshadow of the Parsi textual philanthropy that quickly took on even greater proportions during the 1920s and 1930s.

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[8] Peshotanji Marker (1871-1965) became perhaps the most generous of the twentieth century Parsi philanthropists. In the area of print philanthropy he most famously sponsored the "Marker Avestan Series" beginning in the 1920s, which published Ibrahim Purdavud's Avestan translations, discussed below. Marker also made major contributions to social services and development projects in the city of Yazd. See Lohrasp 1966.

[9] On the life and work of Dinshah Irani, see Marashi, 2013.

[10] For discussions of Zoroastrian migration in the nineteenth century, see Hinnells, 2005; Kestenberg Amighi, 1990.

Ibrahim Purdavud's Bombay Books

Perhaps the most important textual collaboration in this history of Parsi-sponsored book production was between the Iranian scholar Ibrahim Purdavud (1885-1968) and the Parsi community of Bombay. This collaboration took place during the 1920s and 1930s and came to mark the most prolific stage in the history of Parsi textual philanthropy vis-à-vis Iran, producing a series of works that became canonized texts in the revival of Iran's pre-Islamic past during the twentieth century.

Ibrahim Purdavud was a towering figure in twentieth-century Iran's intellectual history (Purdavud 1946; Mostafavi 1992; Nikuyeh 1999). He spent the years immediately before and after World War I in Beirut, Baghdad, Paris, and Berlin where he became intimately acquainted with the traditions of French, German, and English oriental studies. He was also, perhaps most famously, a member of the "Berlin Circle" of Iranian expatriate activist-intellectuals who cooperated with the Germans during the war in charting a new nationalist political and cultural course for Iran (Bihnam 2000, Matin Asgari 2014; Marashi 2008, 49-56. 76-85). The members of this group, which included other luminaries in the early twentieth-century intellectual history of Iranian nationalism such as Hasan Taqizadih, Husain Kazimzadih, and Muhammad Jamalzadih, published a series of periodicals from Berlin between 1916 and 1927, most famously *Kāvih*, which advocated for a new political birth of Iranian nationalism. Like many other members of the Berlin circle, after the war, Purdavud went on to have an illustrious career in Iranian public life and academia. Until his death in 1968, at the age of eighty-three, Purdavud served as Professor of Iranian Studies at the University of Tehran, became the founder of the University's Institute for Iranian Studies, and trained a generation of students in subjects relating to Iranian philology, Zoroastrian studies, and pre-Islamic Iranian history. As part of these efforts, and as one of the key intellectual founders of what became the official Pahlavi culture of mid-century Iran, Purdavud also became a prolific author, often of books that were designed for general audiences.[11]

Significantly, the first stage of Purdavud's prolific post-WWI career took place in Bombay, where he spent the years between 1924 and 1927, at the invitation of the Iran League.[12] The Zoroastrian community inside Iran had become aware of Purdavud's linguistic and scholarly talents as a result of his training in France and Germany and recommended him to the Parsis of Bombay as a worthy recipient of a grant to facilitate his further studies (Hinnells 2005, 80).[13] It was the Iran League— in particular the efforts of the Iran League's impresario President, Dinshah Irani—who facilitated Purdavud's travel to India and his subsequent activities with the Parsi scholarly community of Bombay (Hinnells 1985, 283). During Purdavud's two-and-a-half-year stay in Bombay, he spent his time studying with Parsi scholars at key religious and academic institutions, as well as lecturing to audiences about issues relating to Iran and India's shared civilizational heritage (Mostafavi 1992, 44-53, 119-125). The result of Purdavud's time in India, and his collaboration with the Iran League and the Iranian Zoroastrian Anjuman, was the publication of a series of books that became integral to popularizing the cultural foundations of the Pahlavi state's official nationalism.

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[11] A complete bibliography of Purdavud's writings can be found in Mustafavi (1992, 387-463).

[12] Purdavud spent an additional year in India during the year 1934-35. See Marashi (2010, 72).

Between 1925 and 1933 Purdavud and the Parsis published no less than ten Persian-language typeset printed books in Bombay. These books circulated both within India and were also exported to the growing reading market inside Iran. The first of Purdavud's Bombay books was a slim one hundred-page pamphlet titled *Irānshāh*, published in Bombay under the sponsorship of the Iran League and the Iranian Zoroastrian Anjuman in 1925 (Purdavud 1925).[14] The content of the *Irānshāh* can be described as a modern retelling of the story found in the *Qissih-yi Sanjān*, the sixteenth-century versified narrative written in Persian containing the myth-history of the Zoroastrian migration to India following the seventh-century Arab-Muslim conquest of Iran. While the historicity of the *Qissih-yi Sanjān* has been questioned by many scholars, including by nineteenth-century Parsi scholars—and by Purdavud himself— the *Irānshāh* nevertheless uses the narrative of the *Qissih-yi Sanjān* as one basis for a modern Persian prose retelling of the Parsi exodus story, this time in a narrative produced for an audience of twentieth-century Iranian readers.[15]

The retelling of the Parsi exodus story in the pages of a modern mass-circulating printed book was perhaps necessary. By the early decades of the twentieth century the Iranian lay population—even its then growing, literate, and educated middle class—was only dimly aware of Iran's Zoroastrian heritage, or the existence of a living history of Iranian-Zoroastrianism that continued to survive in the form of the Parsi community of India. The intent of the *Irānshāh* volume, therefore, was precisely to introduce an audience of Iranian readers to what was now becoming viewed as a shared Indo-Iranian cultural heritage linking the Parsi community of India to Iran.

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[13] Purdavud's connection with the Parsis was also established through the introductions made by Muhammad Qazvini, the longtime Iranian scholar-resident in Paris during the period from 1904-1939. Qazvini's Paris apartment had become a salon, which Iranian intellectuals such as Purdavud as well as others, including visiting Parsis, would frequent. Qazvini and Purdavud had also both resided in Berlin during the war years, and collaborated in the publication of *Kavih*. Dinshah Irani writes in the introduction to Purdavud's translation of the Gathas that Qazvini had endorsed Purdavud as a worthy candidate for Parsi sponsorship. See Purdavoud (1927, tranlator's note). For more on the life and work of Muhammad Qazvini see, Ansari (1990); I am grateful to Farzin Vejdani for this reference.

[14] The title of this book comes from the name given by the Parsis to the sacred fire at the *atash bahram* at Udvada, close to the presumed arrival point of the Zoroastrian migrants to India following the seventh century Arab-Muslim conquest of the Sassanian Empire.

[15] On the *Qissih-yi Sanjān* see Williams (2009, 1-40).

There were a number of other books that were published during or immediately after Ibrahim Purdavud's time in Bombay, which added to the corpus initiated by the *Irānshāh* volume. These additional texts include a collection of short and highly accessible essays written by Purdavud titled *Khurramshāh*, also published in Bombay, in 1926, again under the joint sponsorship of the Iran League and the Iranian Zoroastrian Anjuman (Purdavud 1927). The essays collected in this volume were drawn originally from lectures that Purdavud had delivered during his years in India, most of which he had delivered to audiences of Parsi priests, scholars, as well as to the general public in Bombay, Udvada, Puna, and other centers of Indian Zoroastrianism. Some of these lectures had been simultaneously translated into Gujarati, through the efforts of the Iran League, and published separately in Bombay periodicals connected to the Parsi community, such as *Jām-i Jamshīd* and *Qaisar-i Hind* (Purdavud 1927, title page notation).[16]

The mission of Parsi-sponsored textual exchange was in this case—not only to produce Persian language material for an audience of Iranian readers—but instead to make the Parsi community of Bombay aware of the new culture of neo-classicism then taking shape inside Iran. The translation and publication of Purdavud's *Khurramshāh* essays in Bombay's vernacular press worked to serve this part of the mission associated with Parsi-sponsored textual philanthropy. In fact the publication of bilingual texts— in particular Persian-English bilingual texts— was common among the books published as part of the collaboration between Ibrahim Purdavud and the Parsis. These bilingual books helped to facilitate the circulation of these texts, not only as export commodities for an Iranian audience of readers, but in many cases also for the local Bombay audience of Parsi readers whose vernacular languages generally did not include Persian, but were principally limited to English and Gujarati.

Perhaps the most important bilingual book circulating between India and Iran, which was likewise published in Bombay through the collaboration of Purdavud and the Parsis, was a collection of Purdavud's poetry titled *Pūrāndukht-nāmih* ("The Book of Pūrāndukht"), published in 1928 (Purdavud 1928).[17] In addition to his skills as a scholar of pre-Islamic Iranian history and languages, as well as of Zoroastrian studies, Ibrahim Purdavud was also an accomplished poet of the modern Persian language.[18] While his productivity as a poet was not on the order of other Persian poets of the twentieth century, he nevertheless began producing Persian verse at a relatively early age and continued writing poetry for many years. His fascination with pre-Islamic Iranian history and Iran's Zoroastrian heritage also came to shape much of his poetic imagination, and his elegies invoking the memory of Iran's lost classical past became one of the central themes in his poetry.[19]

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[16] The weekly *Jām-i Jamshīd* began publishing in 1829. The *Qaisar-i Hind* began publishing in 1880. They were the two principal Gujarati periodicals serving Bombay's Parsi community.

[17] The collection was named after Purdavud's daughter "Pūrāndukht".

[18] E.G. Browne situates Purdavud alongside Bahar. See, Browne (1983 [1914], 289).

It was precisely because of Purdavud's invocation of Iranian neo-classicism via the idiom of modern Persian poetry, that his Bombay patrons took an interest in publishing his *Pūrāndukht-nāmih* in 1928. The book was produced in a bilingual Persian-English edition and circulated in both India and Iran. Purdavud's friend and principal Parsi interlocutor, Dinshah Irani, produced the English-language renderings of Purdavud's poems for this bilingual anthology. Funding for the publication was procured from the estate of the recently deceased Parsi philanthropist Pestonji Dhunjibhoy Patel. The endowment allowed the Iran League to inaugurate the "Patel Iranian Book Series" devoted to promoting "studies in the history, literature, and philosophy of ancient and modern Iran" (Purdavud 1928, front matter).

Purdavud's *Pūrāndukht-nāmih* is also significant because the subsequent history of this book provides us with more details regarding the circulation of the Bombay-produced printed texts once they reached Iran. As indicated above we know that the commercial contact between Bombay and Iran was greatly facilitated through the expansion of steam navigation during the course of the nineteenth century, as well as the investments in road and rail construction that took place during the Reza Shah period. These changes in technology and infrastructure greatly enabled the circulation of books—along with other goods and commercial commodities— between India and Iran. It is, however, difficult to know with much precision how these books from Bombay circulated once they reached Iran; in the case of the *Pūrāndukht-nāmih*, however, we can give some details regarding this question. This information comes to us from an obituary for Ibrahim Purdavud published after his death in 1968, written by the Iranian historian and bibliographer Iraj Afshar (1925-2011). The obituary by Afshar provides an account of Purdavud's scholarly and literary achievements over the course of his long and productive career, but more important for our present purposes are the obituary's details regarding Afshar's own initial encounter with the writing of Purdavud (Afshar 1970, 559-70). Afshar writes,

> Thirty years ago, while I was completing my elementary education at Tehran's Zoroastrian school....the Zoroastrian Society gave me a collection of Purdavud's poems by the name of *Pūrāndukht*...Their intention in giving me this gift was to familiarize the students of their school with the culture of ancient Iranian Zoroastrianism. Very often I would read his patriotic poems. Portions of those poems have remained in my memory. (Afshar 1970, 560)

The Zoroastrian Society to which Afshar refers is the Anjuman-i Zartushtian, the Iran-based Zoroastrian organization, which had been established along the lines of the Parsi Panchayat of Bombay in the mid-nineteenth century with the help of Parsi emissaries to Iran (Ringer 2011, 149; Kasheff 2011). By the 1920s and 1930s, the Anjuman-i Zartushtian had become active in many areas of Iran's cultural life, including the establishment of primary and secondary schools in a number of Iranian cities. While built primarily to serve Iran's Zoroastrian school-age population, the schools were also open for enrollment to students, such as Afshar, from other religious backgrounds. Among the schools funded by the Anjuman-i Zartushtian were the Shapur Elementary School and the Firuz Bahram High School, both schools built in Tehran (Kasheff 2011; Shahrukh 1994, 22-23). As Iraj Afshar indicates in his obituary for Purdavud, it was during his early teens while he was a student at the Shapur Zoroastrian School in the late 1930s that he came into contact with Purdavud's *Pūrāndukht-nāmih*, approximately ten years after the book's original publication. This detail provides textual evidence regarding the manner of this book's circulation. As Afshar's account suggests, there were established networks of contact and textual exchange linking the Zoroastrian community of Iran with its counterpart in Bombay, and these networks facilitated the distribution of Bombay-published books inside Iran. In this case we can in fact document the young Iraj Afshar reading the Zoroastrian-inspired poetry of Ibrahim Purdavud's *Pūrāndukht-nāmih* as part of the curriculum of Tehran's Shapur Zoroastrian School in the late 1930s.

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[19] Purdavud was also one of the chief proponents of 'pure Persian' poetry, devoid of Arabic loanwords. See Browne (1983 [1914], 292).

In addition to textual distribution through Zoroastrian schools and religious associations, we can also point to additional evidence regarding other methods of circulation. This evidence highlights the connection between the Bombay-published books and the larger context of the social and cultural changes taking place in early twentieth-century Iran, specifically pointing to the connection between a new commercial economy of book consumption and the changing urban morphology of Iran's major cities during the 1920s and 1930s.

In the early twentieth century, the economy of the modern bookstore, as a new urban site where the buying and selling of books took place, stood alongside the still enduring traditions of the specialized book seller and the often itinerant "book peddler" (Marashi 2015, 96). The latter either worked with individual patrons to produce hand-scribed manuscript copies of books, or sold books in the once thriving but now declining economy of the lithograph tradition (Pedersen 1984, 50; Mahdi 1995, 1-16; Marzolph 2001; Green 2010a; Nafisi 2002, 147-149). By the 1930s, the growth of a nationwide Iranian system of education had produced rapidly expanding social strata of new Persian-language readers on an unprecedented scale (Mathee 1993, 333-334; Schayegh 2009). The effect of this growing supply of readers-consumers was to produce new sites of book circulation within Iran's cities that catered to the new tastes and habits of this growing class of citizens educated in the modern public school system. In practice this meant that the social changes in Iran during the 1920s and 1930s, as engendered by the expanding education system, combined with the changes in the urban morphology of the major cities, to produce "modern bookstores" as new sites for the buying and selling of books. The newly literate graduates of the recently established public schools were also increasingly habituated towards the ocular experience of typeset printed texts, in contrast to the older hand-scribed manuscript texts, which had traditionally monopolized the visual and aesthetic experience of reading in the Persian language (Marzolph 2001, 14-15). One of the effects of modern schooling was in fact to train a new social stratum of Iranian

Persian-language readers in the new visual habit of seeing the Persian language in printed typeset form. These textual tastes and visual habits were congruent with new commercial practices associated with the modern experience of book circulation. As Tehran's urban landscape increasingly took on the form of a modern urban space, modern bookstores likewise emerged as sites for the distribution of new printed books intended for this expanding reading market (Marashi, 2015, 97).

The Bombay books produced in the collaboration between Ibrahim Purdavud and the Parsis of Bombay found a perfect home in the new bookstores of Iran's major cities. Tehran, in particular, served as a major site for the sale of books imported from Bombay. Some of the Bombay books in fact provide details regarding the places in both India and Iran where they were sold. For example, the 1928 publication of the first edition of Muhammad Qazvini's (1877-1949) famous collection of essays, the *Bīst Maqālih-yi Qazvīnī* ("Twenty Essays by Qazvini") (Qazvini 1928)— edited by Ibrahim Purdavud and published in typeset form in Bombay by the Iran League[20]— included a colophon and advertising page that tell us precisely where it and the other books sponsored by the Iran League and the Iranian Zoroastrian Anjuman were sold (Qazvini 1928, front matter).[21] It tells us, for example, that these books could be purchased in Bombay at the offices of the Iran League on Cama Street, and at the offices of the Iranian Zoroastrian Anjuman on Cawasji Patel Street. The colophon also indicates where the book could be purchased inside Iran, listing two bookstores in Tehran: one on Lalihzar Street and the other on Nasiriyih Street.[22] Both of these bookstores were located in new commercial zones in central Tehran that by the late 1920s had become hubs of pedestrian activity connected to the social and cultural changes taking place in the city. Purdavud's most significant work—the translation of the Gathas (Purdavud 1927) and the Yashts (Purdavud 1928)—both also published via the typographic method through the auspices of the Parsis during his years in Bombay, were also listed as available for purchase in Tehran's new bookstores.

Other more popular and broadly accessible writings, such as Dinshah Irani's 1927 *Paik-i Mazdāyasnān* ("Messenger of Zoroastrianism), his 1928 work, *Akhlāq-i Irān-i Bāstān* ("The Morals of Ancient Iran")[23]— which sold-out in its first printing only to be re-issued in a 1930 second edition—and his 1933 work *Falsafih-yi Irān-i Bāstān* ("The Philosophy of Ancient Iran"), also gained significant circulation inside Iran through Zoroastrian textual networks linking India and Iran, as well as via modern bookstores now emerging in major urban commercial centers. Most of the Bombay books also indicate that they were published in both a more expensive hardcover price (*jild-i khūb*) and a cheaper softcover (*jild-i mʿamūlī*) version. This differential pricing is perhaps another indication of the modern techniques of distribution and sale associated with these new textual commodities that were exported from Bombay and found their way to the bookstores of Iran's new commercial districts.

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[20] There were numerous other editions of this work later in the century, the first an expanded edition appeared in 1934 co-edited by Abbas Iqbal and Ibrahim Purdavud, and was published in Iran. This edition was later reissued in the early 1950s after the death of Qazvini. Qazvini's writings remain in print in numerous collections produced since the 1980s. The original Bombay edition of 1928 included an English-language introduction by Dinshah Irani, which does not exist in subsequent editions.

[21] The other books listed in the advertising page include the *Irānshāh*, *Khurramshāh, and the Pūrāndukht-nāmih*, as well as several other volumes that had been published as of 1928.

[22] Nasiriyih Street was renamed Nasir Khusraw Street at around this time.

[23] "Shādravān Dīnshāh Irānī," *Andīshih-yi Mā*, (1946) 1:5, gives the publication history of this book.

Conclusion

The history of these books from Bombay highlights a number of trends that were accelerating in both Iran and India during the 1920s and 1930s. At the most general level these books reveal the growing interest in a shared classical past that linked India's Parsi community with the nation-building project of the new Pahlavi state in Iran. Promoting this shared history was seen as mutually beneficial for both Parsis and Iranians. From the Parsi point of view, building cultural ties with Iran worked to reconnect the Parsis with their ancestral homeland, and likewise helped to elevate the social status of their Zoroastrian co-religionists inside Iran. From the point of view of the Pahlavi state, the promotion of Iran's classical heritage had become a major part of the cultural policy of nation-building by the mid-1920s; encouraging the Parsis of Bombay to establish ties with Iran was seen as a natural extension of this larger project of Iranian neo-classicism, especially given the great cultural, political, and economic resources that were at the disposal of the Parsis.

Just as importantly, however, the history of Parsi textual philanthropy highlights the changes taking place in the nature of book production, sponsorship, publication, and circulation within the Indo-Iranian cultural world of the early twentieth century. The "books from Bombay" became new textual and cultural commodities that now moved with much greater facility between India and Iran as a result of the technological innovations in steam, rail, and road transportation. These technological changes — when combined with the social and cultural transformations taking place within Iran that produced a new reading public for these books — enabled the Parsis of Bombay to reach out and communicate with their ancestral homeland with much greater ease and on an unprecedented scale. The Iran League and the Iranian Zoroastrian Anjuman, in particular, mobilized the great resources of the Bombay Zoroastrian community in order to harness these technological and social changes for the purpose of enabling this new engagement with Iran. The sponsorship, production, and distribution of books, was one of the ways in which this Parsi re-engagement with their ancestral homeland occurred.

Ultimately, the most important consequence of the changing nature of book production and circulation within the Indo-Iranian cultural world was the way in which Bombay book production worked to empower the Persianate periphery. Despite the great distance that still separated India and Iran, the Parsi community of Bombay, who had come to imagine themselves as having a special relationship with what they saw as their ancestral homeland, were – through the practice of textual philanthropy— now able to participate in the cultural and political changes taking place inside Iran.

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TEXT AS NATIONALIST OBJECT: MODERN PERSIAN-LANGUAGE HISTORIOGRAPHY ON THE GHURIDS (C. 1150-1215)[*]

Alka Patel

Until the last decade, the Shansabānīs of Ghur, central Afghanistan (hereafter Ghurids), had been assigned the dubious status of "interlude" upon the larger historical landscape of the post-Saljuq Persianate world.[1] The region of Ghur is thought to have been lately Islamized, perhaps in the mid-eleventh century or after, and that by putatively heretical sects such as the Karrāmīyya and the Ismaᶜīlīs.[2] The late and uneven Islamization of the region of Ghur, together with the inhabitants' unsophisticated ways and reputed antagonism toward outsiders, seem to have created a long-enduring resistance to any serious study of the dynasty and its significance, beginning with the early Muslim geographies from the tenth century and continuing until recent times. In effect, the dirth of information available to medieval geographers and chroniclers has also impacted some modern scholarship, which has also been known to treat the lately Islamized dynasties as lesser political and cultural contributors to the Islamic world, and thus also less worthy of analysis (cf. Thomas 2011: 29-30).

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[*] I am grateful to David Thomas, Tamara Sears, and Michael O'Neal for their careful reading of this chapter and their thoughtful feedback.

[1] As characterized by Bosworth, "Ghurids," *EI*[2] (2014), who cited the dynasty's obscure origins among the little studied, seasonally nomadic tribal groups of central Afghanistan, as well as their short-lived apogee on an extra-regional scale. See also Bosworth 1973. In line with Thomas (2011: 4-5, 31) and Flood (2009) the term "Ghurid" is used as convenient shorthand to refer to the polity, though several different socio-political, religious and cultural interests pertained among the elites and general population.

[2] Moreover, the documented shift of allegiance in the 1190s on the part of both reigning Ghurid Sultans Ghīyāth al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn Sām (r. 1163-1203) at Jam-Fīrūzkūh and Herat, and Muᶜīzz al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn Sām at Ghazna (as junior ruler 1174-1206) to the Shāfiᶜī and Ḥanafi *madhhab*s (respectively), has been interpreted in scholarship more as a disavowal of their erstwhile provincialism rather than a sincere change of heart. On early Islam in Ghur, see Jūzjānī 1881, Vol. I: 311ff.; Bosworth 1961; Pazhvāk, 1968-9: 3, 86, 95; Mahmud 2009: 61ff.

Although the Ghurids have garnered relatively little attention in the western languages, frequently overshadowed by their notorious predecessors the Ghaznavids (c. 990-1186),[3] there are four full Persian-language monographs on the dynasty. ᶜAṭīq Allah Pazhvāk's book, titled simply *Ghūrīyān*, was published in 1968-69 by Anjumān-e Tārīkh-e Afghānistān in Kabul. A decade later, Mahdi Roschanzamir's *Tārīkh-e Siyāsī wa Niẓāmī-ye Dūdmān-e Ghūrī* was published in Tehran by Dāneshgāh-e Millī-e Irān (1978-9). In 2003, Tehran's Sāzmān-e Muṭālᶜa wa Tadwīn-e Kutub-e ᶜUlūm-e Insāni-e Dāneshgāhā (SAMT) published Asghar Farughi Abbari's *Tārīkh-e Ghūrīyān*. Finally in 2009, Mahmud Shah Mahmud's *Tārīkh-e impirāṭūrī-e Ghūrīyān* was published by Mu'assasah-e Intishārāt-e Khāvar in Kabul.

From the brief introduction of the Ghurids above, it may appear that an analysis of twentieth- and early twenty-first-century Persian-language scholarship on the dynasty is less than fruitful: Why would such a short-lived dynastic formation – with a transregional presence of little more than a half-century – be of larger academic and general interest? What could we gain from an analysis of modern Persian-language works on the Ghurids, which, due to their subject matter, are likely to be as obscure *historiographically* as the dynasty itself is considered to be *historically*? The answers to these questions are, arguably, interrelated.

Western-language scholarship of the last decade has finally begun to highlight the important geopolitical shifts resulting from the Ghurids' successful north Indian campaigns of the 1190s, and the various historical processes that occurred as consequences in the following centuries. Indeed, there is now a growing acknowledgement of the profound effects they had on the renewed connectivity between the Indic and Iranian worlds (discussed below). Thus, it is timely to survey the modern historiography on this dynasty and its treatment in the scholarship of both the Indo-Persian and Iranian worlds.

Furthermore, analysis of the Persian-language scholarship, in particular, provides two noteworthy opportunities (among others): First, it helps retrieve a body of work that is rarely cited in the growing research on the Ghurids, throwing into further relief the global dominance of western-language scholarship as the foremost voice in narrativizing the past, including the past of non-western regions. Additionally, the examination of modern Persian scholarship on this medieval dynasty advances our analytical awareness of the shifting roles that territorial, ethnic, linguistic and intellectual nationalisms have come to play in the study of pre-modern polities. Indeed, cognizance of the possible effects of extra-intellectual factors on scholarship is equally important in western-language works. though it is rarely acknowledged or examined in this ambit.[4] An analysis of the Persian-language works, then, sets an example for a parallel analysis of works in western languages.

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[3] Compared to the paucity of sources on the Ghurids, the Ghaznavids have received analysis in the works of both colonial-period and post-colonial historians. See O'Neal 2013: 22-29. The notable exception to the overwhelming attention lavished on the Ghaznavids is the work of archaeologist Janine Sourdel-Thomine's publications on the Ghurids (e.g. 1963, 1971, 2004). In fact, it has been suggested that her work may *over*compensate for past neglect by attributing Ghurid patronage to Ghaznavid structures. Cf. Bivar 1980. I am grateful to Frantz Grenet for pointing out this reception of Sourdel-Thomine's work.

Between History and Historiography

The relatively recent scholarly attention on the Ghurid polity recognizing its significance within the Iranian and Indo-Persian worlds necessitates a historical and historiographical context. This context will be useful not only in the subsequent analysis of the Persian-language monographs of the dynasty, it will also justify the undertaking of the following analysis.

The Shansabānī progenitors of what would become the Ghurid dynasty rarely arrested the attention of Ghaznavid-period chroniclers such as al-ᶜUtbī (c. 961-1036/1040) and Baihaqī (995-1077), who described them as one of the several mountain-dwelling tribal peoples of central Afghanistan, among whom Islam had an uneven acceptance well into the eleventh century. Politically speaking, the gradual demise of the Ghaznavids throughout the 1100s attracted politico-military rivals into this pivotal region, which ultimately provided access to the western borders of the India. First the Saljuqs (tenth-mid-twelfth centuries) and then the Khwārazm-shāhs (twelfth-thirteenth centuries) pressed in on central Afghanistan. The Shansabānī Ghurids were able not only to hold their own – at least for a time – against these other forces, they also out-maneuvered regional clans to establish their own supremacy and secured bases for the expansion of their territorial control well beyond their homeland.[5]

After the definitive capture of Ghazna in the mid-1170s, the Ghurid sultans rapidly carved out an empire extending at its height in the 1190s from western Afghanistan through northeastern India. Their short-lived presence in northwest Khorasan – including brief occupation of cities such as Tus, Nishapur, Sarakhs and even Bastam – was indeed a proverbial flash in the pan, essentially lasting about one year in 1200-1201; but Balkh and Herat were longer in Ghurid control (Jūzjānī 1881, Vol. I: 380-2; Pazhvāk 1968-9: 196; O'Neal 2016). To be sure, the speed with which this empire grew was matched by its decline: Already by 1210 the Khwārazm-shāhs had occupied the Ghurid summer capital of Fīrūzkūh, generally accepted to be the site of Jam near Chaghcharan, Ghur Province (central Afghanistan). By 1220, the new overlords themselves, along with the entire region, experienced the Mongol incursions (see esp. Jackson 2000).

The Ghurids' lack of imperial longevity on a transregional scale should not obscure their awareness and adoption of cosmopolitan Persianate cultural practices, thereby also urging a reassessment of their supposedly marginal status within this cultural sphere.

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[4] O'Neal (2013: 190ff.) recently committed a surprising omission: In an otherwise interesting analysis of Paul Wittek's Ghazi thesis of the 1930s, based primarily on the specifics of the Ottoman empire (1299-1923), O'Neal overlooked any discussion of the politico-cultural context of the early twentieth century, such as the not-too-distant confrontations between the colonial powers (particularly Britain) and the Ottomans, the Khilafat movement, and the Ottoman empire's ultimate demise, all surely forming a fundamental backdrop to the inception of the thesis itself.

[5] See esp. Bosworth, 1961, 1965, 1973, 1992; Pazhvāk 1968-9: 90, 94-5; O'Neal 2016.

In the last decade, archaeological investigations at Jam-Fīrūzkūh have brought to light this area's medium- and long-range connectivities. Ceramic assemblages have included not only local production of pottery types common as far east as Bamiyan (the seat of a collateral Shansabānī lineage), they also contain sherds of imported *minā'ī* and other luxury wares from Kashhan in Iran and possibly Merv (modern Turkmenistan), along with a very small representation of pre-Mongol Chinese ware. Ghurid-patronized monumental architecture in the "heartland" of central through western Afghanistan, while possessing subtle distinguishing characteristics, also subscribed to the larger typological, stylistic and iconographic usages in the more central Persianate lands of late-Saljuq Iran.[6] Thus, collectively considered, while the Ghurid polity evinced some culturally peculiar characteristics such as coparcenary or joint heirship,[7] simultaneously they were also participants in a larger Persianate cultural ethos.

Several recent studies have also reassessed the Ghurids' significance in South Asia. Their conquests in the regions flanking the Indus on the west and the east – essentially what are now the Indus's riverine valleys in Pakistan, and northern India – were not only longer lasting, they also set important and far-reaching historical processes in motion. It has been proposed, for example, that the successful Ghurid campaigns of the 1190s were responsible for a distinct and enduring connection between the regions east of the Indus River, northern India and the Iranian world (Flood 2009; Patel 2007/2011).

To be sure, linguistic, religious, commercial and artistic rapports between the Indic and Iranian cultural spheres had already been long underway before the advent of the Ghurids, since at least several centuries before the Common Era.[8] But the emergence of Islam during the late sixth-early seventh century CE in the Arabian peninsula, and its political and religious implantation in the Sassanian heartland of Iran within decades of the official beginning of its calendar, subsequently brought additional socio-political, religious and linguistic contributions to those enduring India-Iran connections. Despite the Ghurids' own purportedly peripheral status in the Iranian world, they set in motion South Asia's transformation into a distinctive participant within this ambit. These connections have been integral to the various nation-states of the Indian subcontinent into the present day.

While the Ghurids' short-lived presence in northwest Khorasan was less than remarkable,[9] their successes at the other extreme of their holdings in the northern Indian plains altered the geopolitics of the region. The Ghurid military deputies laid the foundations of a new political center at Delhi, squarely in the middle of the Ganges-Yamuna *doab*, which gradually displaced the localized power bases of the medieval Indian kingdoms. Archaeological excavations at ancient Indraprastha-Yoginipura-Dhillika (pre-modern Delhi)[10] also point to the quick implementation of the commercial and cultural linkages of their home regions, which had spanned post-Saljuq Iran through China and were evidenced in portable objects as well as architecture.[11]

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[6] For ceramic analyses, see Gascoigne 2010 and Thomas 2011: 275-84. For architecture, see esp. Patel forthcoming [1].

[7] For a discussion of inheritance practices, see Kumar 2007: 61, 185; also O'Neal (2013: 157-60) for a non-indigenous source for these practices and their implementation after the reign of ᶜIzz al-Dīn Huṣain (1100-1146).

[8] See Habib 2002; and Bopearachchi in this volume.

[9] Intriguingly, it is precisely this ephemeral extension across the current political boundaries of the nation-state of Iran that has been employed by Iranian scholars to define them as "eastern Iranian" (discussed below). Cf. Roschanzamir 1978-9: Foreword & 4ff.; and Abbari 2010-11.

With the Ghurids having strengthened the connective conduit between India and the Iranian world, successive waves of ambitious groups from the northwestern areas came to Delhi. While the Mongol campaigns of the 1220s bolstered the initial momentum, eventually military confrontations and fratricidal coups led to the successive ascendancy of the Muᶜīzzi and Shamsī Mamlūks (1206-1290), the Khaljīs (1290-1320) and the Ṭughluqs (1320-c.1400), all power-seekers with origins in or connections with the northwestern borderlands of South Asia reaching into Afghanistan, Central Asia, and Iran.[12] The reinvigorated connectivity also made the ascendancy of the Central Asian Timurids (late-fourteenth-early fifteenth centuries) significant for South Asia. After the sack of Delhi by Timur himself (r. at Samarqand 1370-1405) in 1398 and the definitive demise of the Ṭughluq sultanate, the Timurid-affiliated Sayyids (c. 1415-51) and Lodhis (1451-1526) also based themselves at Delhi, though without the pan-Gangetic and Deccani presence of the Ṭughluqs.[13] It was not until the entry of Bābur (r. at Delhi 1526-30) and the establishment of the Mughal empire (1526-44, 1555-1858) that Delhi and its environs regained paramountcy as the political and cultural fulcrum of northern India, from which radiated a power that spanned eastern Afghanistan through western Bengal, and eventually encompassed the Deccan.[14]

The Ghurid dynasty's gradually recognized significance in recent western-language scholarship begs the question of its reception and analysis in the language(s) considered indigenous to its historical region of origin (central Afghanistan). There is no known scholarship in the local language of Ghur, and it is probable that, *if* the spoken idiom – requiring translation for Maḥmūd Ghaznavī and his son Masᶜūd in the eleventh century (see below) – actually existed, it has died out. Since the mid-twentieth century, however, Persian-language works on the Ghurids have been more numerous than in the western languages, shedding light on the latter's significance in Persian scholarship prior to their recognition in western-language works. It is to these Persian-language monographs that we now turn, and the possible reasons for their earlier focus on the Ghurids.

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[10] For ancient and medieval references to the names of the locality of Delhi, see Mani 1997 and Patel 2014.

[11] Qaṣr-i Safīd, a possible Ghurid-period palace complex within Lal Kot, one of Delhi's early fortified citadels, revealed affinities in plan and decoration to one of the principal palatial complexes in the eastern Iranian world, the Ghaznavid-period Lashkari Bazaar (near Bust, south-central Afghanistan), reoccupied by the Ghurids after c.1175. Moreover, pottery fragments from the Delhi excavations revealed assemblages comparable to Jam-Fīrūzkūh, including celadon thought to come from Northern and Southern Song China (960-1279). See Sourdel-Thomine 1963; Mani 1992: 61ff., 71-2; and Balasubramaniam 2005: esp. 114-20.

[12] See Kumar (2007: 191ff.) for the dispersal of the *ahl-i qalam* in the wake of the Mongol incursions. For later dynastic successions in north India, see Bosworth 1996; and Patel 2006.

[13] Bosworth 1996. For the Khalji and Tughluq expansion into the Deccan, see Eaton and Wagoner 2014: 27-32 & *passim.*

[14] For Mughal expansion into the Deccan see Habib 1982: 74; Chandra 2007: 259ff.

Text as Nationalist Object

It is to be anticipated, perhaps, that a scholar of material culture such as the present author would attempt to conceive of texts as objects, rather than the reverse. The favored theoretical approach in recent scholarship has been that of "reading" objects as virtual texts, particularly invoking paradigms of translation when treating cultural encounters (esp. Flood 2009), ultimately privileging the cognitive process of *reading* rather than *perceiving* even when the cultural production being analyzed is visual. But an "objectual" approach to a text proposes that, much like an object, the text be perceived as an instantaneous phenomenon that captures the bounded, historical and individual moment in which it was *crafted* and which ceased thereafter, though the text's and the moment's (re)interpretations remain ongoing.[15]

There is special benefit to this proposed inversion of the framework in the analysis of modern Persian-language historiography on the Ghurids, whose history has been utilized to further varying nationalisms since the mid-twentieth century. Understood as nationalist objects, each of the four texts under discussion captures and ensues from a specific moment within a regional nationalism, which the text as object helps elucidate to later viewers/readers. Like objects, the text themselves could also impact later productions in both content and presentation – respectively iconography and style in "objectual" terms. Despite the cessation of the moment of creation/composition, texts and objects are of course variously interpreted through time, depending on the multiple and simultaneous contexts of the viewer/reader. An "objectual" approach to the text allows a clear apprehension of its circumscribed moment of creation, also aiding in the assessment of "the location of *individual* historians [the makers of the texts/objects] within a particular set of social networks and institutional contexts" (Vejdani 2014: 6).

Each of the modern Persian-language monographs on the Ghurids, ranging from Pazhvāk's 1968-69 *Ghūrīyān* through Mahmud's 2009 *Tārīkh-e impirāṭūrī-ye Ghūrīyān*, are all works that, to varying degrees, subscribe to the conventions of western-language history writing prevalent throughout the twentieth century. For example, all of the works have tables of contents organized by topic, providing textual markers of the locations of material that may specifically interest the reader. The contents are well cited with footnotes overall, at times expectedly extensive when elaborating on points in the main text or engaging with another author's assertions. The bibliographies are also generally impressive, including primary sources in Persian and Arabic, as well as English-, French-, German-, and Russian-language secondary literature (e.g. Mahmud 2009: 53 & notes). The end matter of the books conveniently provides genealogical diagrams, while the indices attempt to anticipate a reader's possible research interests in their alphabetical entries by place, individual names, and sources. Indeed, in keeping with the most recent trends in historical scholarship, Mahmud's *Tārīkh-e impirāṭūrī-ye Ghūrīyān* (*muqaddima: jīm, dāl*) lists not only the overarching patterns of proto-feudalism and slavery that, according to him, characterized Ghurid history, he also declares his methodological divergence from other historians:

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[15] Notably, archaeologists and other art/architectural historians – emphatically scholars of material culture – have recently espoused this inversion in their approaches to texts, specifically inscriptions (e.g. Morrison and Lycett 1997; Sears 2014: esp. ch. 2). In fact, Morrison and Lycett (1997: 216) elucidate the fundamental aprioristic reason behind the primacy of a textual methodology even in approaches to material culture in their observation that "written history occupies a privileged position relative to archaeological data, even when the latter contradict or complement textual accounts," so that objects often serve simply "to illustrate "known" historical patterns." See also below in main text.

> Scholars have pursued the social-economic history of Ghur, (but) they have revealed the politics of individuals, of sultans. Individuals speed up or slow down history, they do not change it. Individuals are made by social conditions, their surroundings. The focus here is on social and economic conditions, with only some mention of politics [where required].[16]

Consistent with the hegemonic historical writing of western languages, the four Persian-language works also treat material culture in largely descriptive terms, relying on it more as an illustration of text-based interpretations of historical events, rather than as a primary source determining its own historical questions. Three of the four monographs dedicate several pages or even separate chapters to archaeological sites within the Ghurids' home regions in Afghanistan and their more securely conquered locales in northern India, their architectural remains and some portable objects.[17]

While such general surveys of material culture can be informative, they do not generate lines of inquiry in their own right. For example, both Pazhvāk and Mahmud describe the "Indian-style" Masjid-i Sangi [Figs.1-4] near Larvānd, Farah Province (southwestern Afghanistan): Mahmud (2009: 330-1) in fact diverges from Pazhvāk (1968-9: 52-4), on whose work he relies heavily in other respects,[18] proposing that the small building was made of reused materials rather than newly carved components. Neither of these authors, however, pursued the *raison d'être* for the enigmatic little structure in the Ghurid "heartland," so far from their recently conquered Indian territories. Even though such investigations could shed light on the possible importation of labor from India into the Ghurids' home regions, it was left to the ambit of archaeologists and art historians to take up the matter.[19] The reliance on material culture as an illustrative addendum, rather than as a source – at least for specific historical questions, if not full-blown frameworks of inquiry – additionally likens the Persian-language works to their western-language counterparts (Patel forthcoming [2]).

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[16] Mahmud 2009: *muqaddima: he*; emphasis added. Unless otherwise noted, all translations are my own.

[17] Cf. Pazhvāk 1968-9: e.g. 52-7; Roschanzamir 1978-9: 157-84; Mahmud 2009: 32-50, 334ff. Abbari (2010-11) has no mention of material remains whatsoever.

[18] Cf. particularly the chapter titled Poets of the Pashto Language (Mahmud 2009: 317-28). Also see below for Pazhvāk's employment of the Pashtun ethnie in his monograph on the Ghurids.

Although the overarching characteristics discussed above reveal the four monographs on the Ghurids to be equal participants in the modern history-writing "tradition," the differences among the works should also be noted. Each work was produced at a particular moment of the twentieth or early twenty-first century, and also in the specific national *locus* of either Afghanistan or Iran. Altogether, each of these *text-objects* captures and responds to these spatio-temporal *loci.*

Afghanistan

Pazhvāk's *Ghūrīyān* (1968-9) and Mahmud's *Tārīkh-e impirāṭūrī-ye Ghūrīyān* (2009), both published in Kabul, are extremely valuable works not only for their focus on the Ghurids, but also in their own right as rare, available examples of interpretations produced *in* Afghanistan of the region's own medieval past.[20] Both authors openly state their intentions in their respective treatment of this *Afghani* dynasty. Pazhvāk (1968-9: 1) declares at the outset,

> The Ghuri lineage of the amirs and sultans of Ghur…[were] extremely famous in our nation's history [*tārīkh-e vaṭan-e mā*] and occupied a distinguished place; because of their greatness and splendor they are considered to be among the glories of this land…The majority of historians count [them also as having] a strong military and political role in Central Asia.

Less fulsome in his expression, and more cognizant of the current socio-political needs of his nation, Mahmud (2009: Foreword) dedicates his book to "…the ancient and historical region of Ghur and its descendants, and especially to the scholars of this land who are concerned with the peace and progress of beloved Afghanistan, and in helping its oppressed people." Employing a strategy that might profitably be termed intellectual nationalism, the authors' respective foci on the Ghurids were motivated by the dynasty's origins in Afghanistan, as well as its potential to contribute to the nation's cultural, historical, and political recognition on a global level. Both works also largely focus on the Ghurids' home regions in Afghanistan and their albeit short-lived presence in eastern Iran; Mahmud (2009: 340-50) makes only illustrative note of their north Indian presence in his description of the two best known Ghurid mosque complexes at Delhi (1192-3) and Ajmer (1199). Nevertheless, the two works' forty-year difference in date of publication deserves examination, as it demonstrates the changing context of this intellectual nationalism, responding at certain moments to new developments in scholarly frameworks, and at others to *extra*-intellectual political factors.

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[19] See Scarcia & Taddei 1973; Ball; and most recently Flood 2009: 203ff.; and Patel 2015.

[20] Cf. Hyman (2002: 307), who observed that "[n]either ancient nor medieval history has become well integrated into the emerging nationalist presentation of Afghanistan's history."

Pazhvāk's *Ghūrīyān* provides invaluable information while also embodying mid-twentieth century Afghani nationalism. It evinces an intimate – if unverifiable – tribal and geographical knowledge of the Ghurids' area of origin in central Afghanistan, a region little explored to the present day. Indeed, the author's apparent on-the-ground familiarity with this difficult terrain and its reputedly hostile populations is not only unique – frequently cited in Mahmud's geographical descriptions forty years later – it also underscores the medieval Arabic-language geographers' own difficulties in obtaining data about the mountain-protected peoples of Ghur.[21] Pazhvāk's valuable descriptions ultimately help explain the comparatively late Islamization of the region as well. Simultaneously, Pazhvāk's work captures and ensues from mid-twentieth century Afghani nationalism, characterized by memories of the Third Anglo-Afghan War (1919) and a consequent emphasis on its own sovereign rights as a nation, and on Islam – not to mention its overwhelming Pashtun inflection at the time (Hyman 2002).

Pazhvāk's description (1968-9: 44 & *passim*) of Ghur and Garjistan stressed these areas' difficulty of access and even impregnability, and averred, "both played similar roles in freedom and independence." Although this is a mysterious, decontextualized conclusion to a geographical and topographical description, it becomes more understandable in light of Afghani diplomats' efforts to champion their nation's sovereignty after centuries of subjugation to outside powers, precisely around the time of *Ghūrīyān*'s publication in the late 1960s. The career of the eminent litterateur and diplomat ᶜAbd al-Raḥmān Pazhvāk (1919-95), *Ghūrīyān* author ᶜAṭīq Allah's older brother, embodied this phase of Afghani nationalism and diplomacy (Malekyar 2013).[22]

Indeed, the younger Pazhvāk did not hesitate to capitalize on the leitmotiv of fierce isolation and independence running through *Ghūrīyān*. The author utilized the questions surrounding Ghur's local language in the tenth-eleventh centuries to shift eastward the sources of some of the most ancient Iranian texts (Pazhvāk 1968-9: 90ff.). Building on Isṭākharī's (d. 951) cursory note that Ghur's language was different from that of the rest of Khorasan, and Baihaqī's mention of the Ghaznavids' need for translators during their campaigns into the area, he proposed that the indigenous language of Ghur was the famed Zand, referring to the form of Pahlavī into which the Old Iranian Avestan texts were exegetically translated (Kellens 2011).

Pazhvāk was not content with appropriating a merely historical *locus* of the origins of ancient Iranian culture; he further brought the debate into his own day. Being a proponent of Pashtun nationalism as virtually synonymous with Afghani nationalism, Pazhvāk attempted to redeem the Pashto language from its peripheral status in the wider Persianate ecumene, and even cast it as central to the latter. Pointing out that Pashto was widely spoken in Ghur

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[21] See discussion above of the pre-modern Arabic-language geographers' interest in the Ghurids. Cf. Pazhvāk 1968-9: 4ff., 11ff.; Mahmud 2009: 329ff. esp. notes.

[22] I am grateful to Chaled Malekyar for providing me with the Pazhvāk family genealogy from the anthology *Bānu-ye Balkh* (Peshawar, 2000), the posthumous publication of the elder Pazhvāk's poetry.

(though in dialect form), he declared that it was also the closest modern language to the ancient Zand (Pazhvāk 1968-9: 91). Research on Pashto etymology has suggested origins in Badakhshan and affinities with a Śaka dialect akin to Khotanese, along with a possible Old Persian linguistic ancestor close to the language of the *Gathas* (Morgenstierne 1982). But Pazhvāk's intellectual and political intentions were made clear in his analysis: the positing of a historical parity, if not superiority, of *Khāvar* vis-à-vis *Bākhtar*, and thereby a possible premise for just such a reconfiguration in modern times. Pazhvāk's *Ghūrīyān*, then, was a text crafted during the heyday of Afghani nationalism in the mid-twentieth century, a time- and place-specific phenomenon that surely impacted what in "objectual" terms could be termed *Ghūrīyān*'s iconography, i.e. the choice of the Ghurids as the main subject of the work, as well as its style, or the specific intellectually nationalistic rendering of them.

Notwithstanding the above-mentioned Foreword of Mahmud's *Tārīkh-e impirāṭūrī-e Ghūrīyān* (2009; henceforward *Tārīkh*), this work appears to respond more to changing scholarly frameworks than political circumstances. It still evinces an intellectual nationalism, though it is subtler than that of Pazhvāk's *Ghūrīyān*. But the monograph presents a very different picture of the history of Ghur and its inhabitants from most scholarship. In complete contrast to the western-language historiography that has, until recently, depicted Ghur as a geographically isolated, culturally and politically unimportant area at the eastern edges of the Persianate world, only partially Islamized as late as the mid-eleventh century, *Tārīkh* recasts Ghur's people as industrious, productive, and even mercantile, and the region as well communicated with the surrounding lands due to demand for its commodities (Mahmud 2009: 252ff.). Equally important is the reflection instigated by the work on two different historiographical moments: one, the earlier generation (mid-twentieth century) of western-language scholarship on the Ghurids; the second, the discernible recurring turn across multiple disciplines toward the examination of trade as a driving process in transregional contacts throughout history.

In line with scholarly consensus, *Tārīkh* (Mahmud 2009: 56-7, 61) began with a description of the late and gradual entry of Islam into Ghur, apparently initiated with the eleventh-century Ghaznavid campaigns in the region. But at variance with mid-twentieth-century scholarship, *Tārīkh* does not equate Ghur's gradual Islamization with the region's overall cultural and political backwardness. Relying on a variety of principally textual sources (with only a brief illustrative mention of objects in the Herat Museum), the work highlights the commodities – specifically slaves, textiles, and metalwork – produced in and exported from Ghur (Mahmud 2009: 244ff.). Regarding the region's metal deposits and mining in particular, *Tārīkh* attempts to answer important questions that follow from the historical texts, which periodically noted the skilled working of raw materials into armaments for which Ghur was famous: surely, the commodities became well known and desirable precisely *because* of their export to adjacent areas?

Tārīkh gathers scattered data on Ghur's commodities, and the possible transregional connectivities they inspired, suggesting that what was previously understood as a geographically and culturally isolated region was actually within the commercial flow of neighboring Khorasan to the west and, after the Ghaznavid campaigns, also benefited from eastward linkages with India (Mahmud 2009: 242-5). In addition to the export of arms and other metalwork, *Tārīkh* makes extensive mention of textile production in Ghur itself, as well as its import and use of Bukharan cloth (see below). Finally, the work further stresses the symbiosis between nomadic groups (*ṣaḥrā-nishīnān*) and urban dwellers (*shahr-nishīnān*) in the overall economic system: Not only did nomads provide portable products for sale (e.g. leather goods) and pack animals for transport, they were also the purveyors of Turk slaves to the merchants who in turn brought them to the markets of large urban centers (Mahmud 2009: esp. 254-5).[23]

While *Tārīkh* makes a compelling case for the re-examination of Ghur's connectivities with neighboring regions, its use of temporally varying and even discrepant textual sources is not without methodological problems. Its reliance on recent anthropological reports such as the *Qāmūs-e jeoghrāfīyya-ye Afghānistān* – in tandem with Pahlavī and early Islamic sources (e.g. al-Ṭabarī, 839-923 CE; Ibn Ḥauqal d. 988 CE) – all beg the question of whether their descriptions actually pertained to the period prior to the Ghurids' politico-military ascendancy beyond their region of origin (Mahmud 2009: 242-55). Additionally, *Tārīkh* also implies that Khorasan's well known commercial centers such as Herat, Nishapur, and Tus were indicative of the conditions in Ghur, though previous scholarship has stressed a marked contrast between them (e.g. Pazhvāk 1968-9). It should be remembered that the cities of Nishapur, Tus and their vicinity came into Ghurid control c. 1200, only after the dynasty's transregional emergence, and for less than a year (see Jūzjānī 1881, Vol. I: 374, 378-80).

Herat, about 220 kilometers from Jam or the putative Fīrūzkūh, was in Ghurid hands from c.1175, and the senior sultan Ghīyāth al-Dīn moved his court there in 1199. The city was indeed "the point of convergence for several important caravan routes…[and] a thriving emporium for varieties of Asian products," probably since Sassanian times (Khazeni et al. 2012). It should be noted, however, that the networks of communication in which Herat played a pivotal role appear to have been oriented westward toward greater Khorasan, rather than east toward Ghur and Afghanistan's fertile mountains, further seeming to circumnavigate Ghur in their branches from Herat northward to Bukhara or southward to Kandahar.[24] Despite the relatively short distance between Herat and the Ghurid heartland, there were surely palpable differences in levels of transregional connectivity between settlements in Ghur – including Jam-Fīrūzkūh itself – and the truly globally inclined cities of Khorasan, which embodied a thriving urban mercantilism from which the Ghurid polity would have fully benefited *after* the sultans' territorial expansions beyond Ghur itself.

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[23] In a noteworthy convergence, Thomas (2011: 22-28) also effectively summarizes the deleterious preconceptions running through archaeological and historical research on nomadic and semi-sedentist societies.

[24] The Indian *munshi* Mohan Lal, who traveled through Afghanistan and Uzbekistan in the early 19th century, listed – in a proto-economic history mode – the sources of income for the city of Herat, including levies on crops and commodities (e.g. tobacco, soap) as well as what appear to be guilds and commercial corporations (weavers, horse-sellers). Additionally, "money [was] collected from the black tents of the *Emak* and *Elat* annually" (Mohan Lal 1834: 11 & *passim*). Mohan Lal also reports on the difficulties of caravan routes northward to Bukhara, recommending the western route closer to Sarakhs than the more easterly one through Maymana (*Ibidem*: 10).

Notwithstanding *Tārīkh*'s admirable and at least partially plausible reinterpretation of the surviving evidence to suggest a new, less isolated view of historical Ghur, possibly deeper intellectually nationalist motivations for the recasting of Ghur's history should also be borne in mind. The political and intellectual realms of the present day place a discernible premium on transregional connectivity. On the current world stage, political isolationism is not associated with friendly nations; accessibility, transparency, and cooperative participation in the world order are much more desirable characteristics. Concomitantly, the growing emphasis in the scholarly realm on the investigation of global regions' historical connectivities and the mobility of past communities, has been a valid and even welcome development across disciplines such as archaeology, art history, history, and also literary studies. This brief analysis of *Tārīkh* as a nationalist object has proven beneficial: The text's albeit discrepant interpretation of other textual sources has helped modify – though not completely refute – the historical isolation of Ghur; at the same time the analysis urges caution and reflection on the *extra*-intellectual factors that may have come to bear not only on the monograph, but equally on current scholarly paradigms in western-language historiographies as well.

Iran

Unlike the few though gradually increasing studies on Afghanistan's nationalist discourses of the last century,[25] scholarship on the monarchy and nation-state of Iran's engagement with ideas of identity and nationalism has proliferated over the last two decades.[26] Focused works have elucidated the Qajars' (1785-1925) initial terms of encounter with notions of nationalism and a bounded cultural and territorial identity, imported by Iranian intelligentsia who had political, cultural, and commercial contacts with the west (Abdi 2001: 52; Ashraf 2006/2012). Shifts and variations in the localized interpretations of these concepts came to the fore on the eve of and following the Constitutional reforms (1905-1911): Scholarship has highlighted the early Pahlavi regime's (1921-1951) resuscitation and politically motivated reinterpretations of the ancient Iranian past as the principal platforms for the formation of a modern Iranian identity.[27] These platforms further accrued anti-Islamic overtones with Muhammad Reza Shah Pahlavi (r. 1941-1979). In large part, post-Revolutionary nationalism was emphatically

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[25] See Hyman 2002; a valuable overview is provided by Noelle-Karimi 2004/2012.

[26] Imaginably, the bibliography for Iranian nationalist and identity discourses is vast, and surveying its entirety is beyond the scope of this chapter. Only selected sources directly relevant to the present discussion are cited here. A useful *longue durée* analysis of ideas of Iranian identity from Achaemenid through modern times is provided by Amanat 2012.

[27] Informative overviews of Qajar- and Constitutional-period nationalisms include Kashani-Sabet 2002; Tavakoli-Targhi 2009; and Ashraf 2006/2012. Additionally, Abdi (2001) provides a thorough survey of the use of archaeology in the solidification of an Iranian identity based on the ancient past and its dissemination abroad, both in the early and later Pahlavi periods. A more specific but equally fascinating look at the work of Arthur Upham Pope, a self-interested scholar/dealer, in constructing an essentializing "Persian Art" and the fomentation of its appreciation in the west (at least partly for profit) is the subject of Rizvi 2007.

Islamizing in character and specifically Shiᶜa in orientation, arguably in reaction to the precipitate distancing from Islam that the Shah's regime posited as tantamount to Iran's modernization (Abdi 2001). In the end, "there are many different emphases in Iranian nationalism, including linguistic, territorial, religious and ethnic....Religious fundamentalism, in other words, [has] become one more expression of nationalism."[28]

Of course not *all* history writing in Iran was necessarily nationalist in impetus or intent. Nevertheless, the well-charted historiographical landscape of the many Iranian nationalisms of the twentieth century is extremely useful in contextualizing the production of the two monographs on the Ghurids by Mahdi Roschanzamir (1978-9) and Asghar Farughi Abbari (2010-11), themselves rare instances of Iranian works focused on a seemingly minor dynasty of *Khāvar* (discussed below). Our approach of *text-as-object*, together with an awareness of the shifting pre- and post-Revolutionary Iranian nationalisms, are helpful in two principal ways: first, in perceiving the dialogues as well as divergences between each of the works and their respective larger contexts; second, in becoming fully aware of the impact of extra-intellectual factors on the interpretation of the past, more broadly defined as the writing of history itself.

The two books were not only published almost 30 years apart – and thereby within varying nationalist moments – they each ensued from markedly differing geneses. Roschanzamir's book appears to have been the culmination of a long-standing interest in the Ghurid dynasty, by a scholar who had begun publishing articles on Ghurid history and material culture as of AH *shamsī* 1352/1973. Roschanzamir's pursuit of a monograph on a dynasty of the Islamic period stands out against the state-sponsored emphasis on *pre*-Islamic *Irānshahr* in many fields of historical inquiry. Nevertheless, according to the author, the Shahbanu Farah Pahlavi herself supported the endeavor (Roschanzamir 1978-9: Foreword); moreover, it was temporally immersed in Muhammad Reza Shah's Iran, with every historical date noted in the Shāhanshāhī era (with Hijrī *shamsī* and Mīlādī equivalents supplied most of the time but not in every instance). Thus, though the book's choice of topic may have been anomalous to the subjects prevalent in other officially supported history writing of the later Pahlavi era on the eve of the 1979 Islamic revolution, the author's adoption of officially sanctioned protocols – along with other reasons discussed below – likely aided in its patronage at the highest governmental levels.[29]

In contrast to Roschanzamir's monograph, Abbari's work is a short, 110-page textbook intended by its publisher SAMT as a primer for students in Iranian universities. Again, the subject of a seemingly far-removed dynasty, both in time and space, may appear to be at odds with the organization's record of publications and its avowed areas of research, including Iranology, Islamic Studies, and the Persian language. However, the long-standing cooperation between SAMT and the countries of the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) explains not only visits to Tehran by Afghanistan's Joint Committee for Higher Education, but also SAMT's initiative in commissioning an albeit brief textbook on one aspect of Afghani history.[30]

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[28] Succinctly stated by Kashani-Sabet 2002: 162, 178. See also Amanat 1989.

[29] Roschanzamir's articles on the Ghurids were primarily published in the journal *Bar-rasihā-ye Tārīkhī*; see http://www.noormags.ir/ with the Persian search heading of Rūshanẓamīr, Mahdī. Given the German transliteration of the author's name, it is possible he had enduring connections with Germany-Austria, and that an education in Europe helped inspire an interest in a region and historical period of the larger Iranian world which would have been difficult to research in Iran. Nonetheless a eulogy (c.1998) makes no mention of Roschanzamir's substantial corpus of research on the Ghurids, instead emphasizing his literary work. I am indebted to Khodadad Rezakhani for helping me locate Roschanzamir's bibliography and the available biographical information.

Despite these two works' varying historical contexts and *raisons d'être*, they share one overarching characteristic: Both works absorb the geographical area of Afghanistan into the concept of *Irānshahr*, a discernible preoccupation since the nineteenth-century beginnings of attempts at defining Iran in cultural terms, often toward political ends (Amanat 1989; Kashani-Sabet 2002: 163). Roschanzamir (1978-9: 4ff.) indulges in a gesture of geographic nationalism by consistently locating the Ghurids in "the east of this country" (*sharq-e īn kishwār*), and declares *Shansab* to be an eastern Iranian name. Meanwhile, Abbari (2010-11: 8) pursues a linguistic absorption of the area into *Irānshahr*, averring that, though Afghani scholars believed Pashto to have been Ghur's principal language, this was true only among the region's more isolated mountain people, and that until the fifth century of the Hijra (c. eleventh century CE), by when Persian had become the primary language of communication (the author provides no citations for these observations).[31]

Abbari's work – like Roschanzamir's – was published under the auspices of a government-controlled organization, composed evidently in keeping with a religious and specifically Shi^ca agenda that has formed the thrust of post-Revolutionary nationalist historiography (cf. Kashani-Sabet 2012). In the context of this particular religious-nationalist moment, then, Abbari (2010-11: 99-100) responsively emphasizes the Ghurids' possible early Shi^{c}a affiliations, further reinforcing their ties not only to a historical *Irānshahr* but also to the contemporary nation of Iran: alluding to Iran's straitened minority status in the Islamic world due to its majority Shī^{c}a population, the author suggests that the Ghurids disavowed their own Shī^{c}ism for political expediency.[32]

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[30] See www.en.samt.ac.ir/. The ECO consists of all nations sharing political boundaries with Iran, in addition to Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, and the Kyrgyz Republic – essentially all those geographical areas which, historically, had varying degrees and types of connections with Persian language and/or Persianate culture. Cf.
www.ecosecretariat.org.

[31] Abbari's admission of Pashto as the language of Ghur until the mid-first millennium CE appears to be a softening of Roschanzamir's (1978-9: 22) stance that *Shansab* as an eastern Iranian name also indicated the sultans' mother tongue (*zabān-e mādarī*) to be Persian. Although Roschanzamir' bibliography (1978-9: 211) lists the work of Pazhvāk (1968-9) among its sources, clearly the author disregarded his Afghani colleague's theories and argumentation.

The co-optation of the Ghurid dynasty, its geographical location, and cultural history into an emphatically *Iranian* cultural sphere – whether in a pre- (Roschanzamir) or post-Revolutionary (Abbari) nationalist-historiographical milieu – has resulted in two discernible consequences. One is the erasure of geographical as well as cultural nuances in different areas of what is broadly conceived as the Iranian world. The environmental and cultural granularities of central Afghanistan, the rugged climatic and topographical realities as the home of nomadic and semi-sedentist tribal groups – amply demonstrated in Pazhvāk's 1968 work as distinguishing the easternmost reaches of *Khāvar* from *Bākhtar* – are summarily ignored in the Iranian publications, where the principal aim appears to be the full absorption of the Ghurids into "Iran."

Concomitantly, Roschanzamir and Abbari both took much greater interest than their Afghani counterparts in treating Ghurid activity beyond the putative Iranian world, in northern India. The Afghani publications made brief mention of the Ghurid expansion into the north Indian plains only in their descriptions of the best-known Ghurid architectural remains there, namely Delhi's Qutb Mosque (founded 1192) and its Minar (1199). By contrast, the Iranian works devote substantial sections to this expansionism: Roschanzamir (1978-9: 106-35) has an entire chapter on the Ghurid victories in India, along with brief interpolations on India where relevant in his recounting of Muᶜīzz al-Dīn's reign (pp. 97-105). Almost half of Abbari's book (2010-11: 67ff.) is dedicated to the Ghurids' north Indian campaigns. The author characterizes them as "among the most brilliant phases" of the younger sultan Muᶜīzz al-Dīn's career, not least because of "the great service" he rendered to Islam as he established it on a long-term basis in the subcontinent.

It is noteworthy that, in their chapters treating the Ghurid campaigns in northern India, both authors rely heavily on *The Struggle for Empire* (first ed. 1957), Volume V of the ten-volume series *The History and Culture of the Indian People.* Roschanzamir (1978-9: 106ff.) virtually translates entire passages by R.C. Majumdar – the general editor of the *History and Culture* series and a principal author in Volume V – describing the cultural and political vulnerability of India in the twelfth century, which facilitated the Ghurids' rapid gains in the north Indian plains (Majumdar ed. 1957: 104ff). Abbari (2010-11: 67ff.) subscribes to a similar interpretation of twelfth-century India, though without definitive citation of Majumdar's work.

Although the coalescence of an Indian nationalist historiography is beyond the scope the present analysis, focused as it is on Persian-language works, a few remarks are necessary here. A declaredly nationalist project of the early years after the 1947 Partition of India and Pakistan along Hindu-Muslim lines, *The History and Culture of the Indian People* series was first initiated by Dr Rajendra Prasad, President of India between 1950-62, and carried forward by the prominent nationalist politician K.M. Munshi. The project was built on the scholarship of eminent historians such as R.C. Majumdar, and thereby instrumental in setting the intellectual tenor of historical inquiry for decades to come. Half of the series was dedicated to the ancient periods of the nation-state of India, amounting to an all-but-overt omission of the nation's Islamic history. Even in Volume V, focused on the tenth through thirteenth centuries, the majority of its 800+ pages treat the non-Islamic Indian dynasties, their political administrations, and vernacular literatures, while only three chapters treat the Ghaznavid invasions, the so-called Turkish Conquest of Northern India (i.e. the Ghurids), and their successors. These interlopers were rendered insignificant in the newly fabricated genealogy of the emerging nation-state of India, given their otherness and antipathy to "Indian" civilization, and thus deserved little attention in its present identity.[33] With the *History and Culture* project being given full governmental support in composition and dissemination, it is little wonder that the series came to comprise a staple reference work also for Iranian scholars.

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[32] Court poets and historians from the twelfth century onward provided their Ghurid patrons with more illustrious genealogies than their historical mountain-dwelling origins, including mention of the conversion of the progenitor Shansab by the Caliph ᶜAlī (r. 656-61) himself. However, according to these fabricated genealogies, his descendants approached the Abbasid court to gain investitures in their favor against rival clans, most notably the Shīthānids – hence their rapid integration into the Sunni fold. Cf. Bosworth 2014; and O'Neal 2016.

The driving forces behind an Indian nationalist interpretation of the past came to bear, then, on the Iranian authors' understanding of Ghurid activity in northern India. Indeed, the pre- and post-Revolutionary nationalist engagements of Roschanzamir and Abbari also comprised the pivot on which the Ghurids' north Indian successes were interpreted: Roschanzamir (1978-9: 124-5) relied on Majumdar's writings to criticize the violent Islam the Ghurids' supposedly carried to India, in line with the anti-Islamic polemics of the later Pahlavi period. By contrast, predictably in keeping with a post-Revolutionary ideology, Abbari (2010-11: 67) used the same source to portray Mu^{c}īzz al-Dīn as an austere Muslim sultan who denied himself the enjoyment of India's legendary wealth by deputing the conquered territories to trusted military commanders, rather than ruling them himself. In the end, it appears that the rare Iranian scholarship on the Ghurids is more informative about the multiple nationalisms of the twentieth century, than its purported subject of analysis.

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[33] See Basham (1957: 131), esp. his quoting Majumdar's justification for the emphasis on the ancient period:

> The contribution of different ages to the evolution of national history and culture should be the main criterion of their relative importance, though the space devoted to each should also be largely determined by the amount of historical material available. There is, no doubt, a dearth of material for the political history of ancient India, but this is to a large extent made up for by the corresponding abundance on the cultural side.

It is notable that Basham, himself a well-respected historian, seems to agree with the "emphasis of the whole series…on the history of the Hindus…for the inhabitants of India are now as always predominantly Hindu, and a similar series of histories, written from the Muslim angle, will no doubt sooner or later appear in Pakistan" (p. 132).

Encounters

The preceding essay has been about methodological and historiographical encounters, intended to historicize both inherited knowledges and our own present-day approaches to a specific set of historical processes. The encounter between material and textual analysis was used as an opportunity to invert current methodologies approaching objects as texts, rendering instead the *text as object*: the inversion facilitated our apprehension of the bounded temporalities and locations in which texts on the Ghurids (the "objects") were created. Such a method particularly highlighted the impact on scholarship – and the latter's response in turn – of prevailing nationalist agendas of the nation-states of Afghanistan, Iran and India at differing moments in time. Ideally, this new perspective will result in an ongoing reflection also on the boundedness of *current* times and spaces, tantamount to an awareness of the extra-intellectual factors – whether nationalist or otherwise – that are undeniably present in all textual production.

The essay also juxtaposed three regional historiographical trajectories, which have convergently "conspired" to circumscribe the Ghurid dynasty's historical significance. The meager information available to early Arabic-language geographers and other chroniclers, possibly compounded by disinterest in lately or incompletely Islamized regions, has meshed with the deployment of the Ghurid dynasty in nationalism-inflected scholarship: Afghani works have tended to claim the Ghurids as their own, inadvertently downplaying the transregional reach of their activities. Similarly, publications in pre- and post-Revolutionary Iran have all but absorbed the Ghurids into *Irānshahr*, thus not only preventing a wider perspective on the dynasty, but also eliding into an artificial monolith the palpable cultural specificities of the eastern (and other) edges of the Iranian world. Finally, overtly nationalist Indian historiography attempted to minimize the impact of Ghurid expansion into the northern areas of the Indian subcontinent, effectively erasing them from the larger story of "India." The results of this convergent historiographical conspiracy are clear, and an awareness of this genealogy of knowledge will hopefully help chart new directions for analytical inquiry, with a cognizance of our own boundedness in space and time.

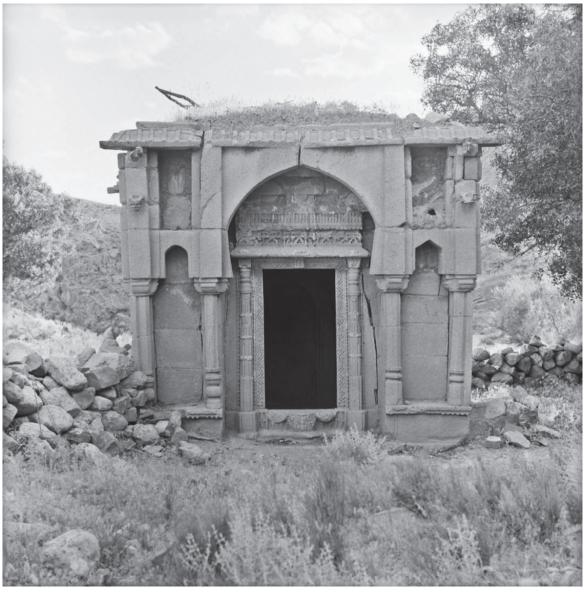

Figure. 1. Masjid-i sangī, c.1200. Larvānd, Farah Province (Afghanistan). General view from east. © History of Art and Architecture Library Collections, Harvard University

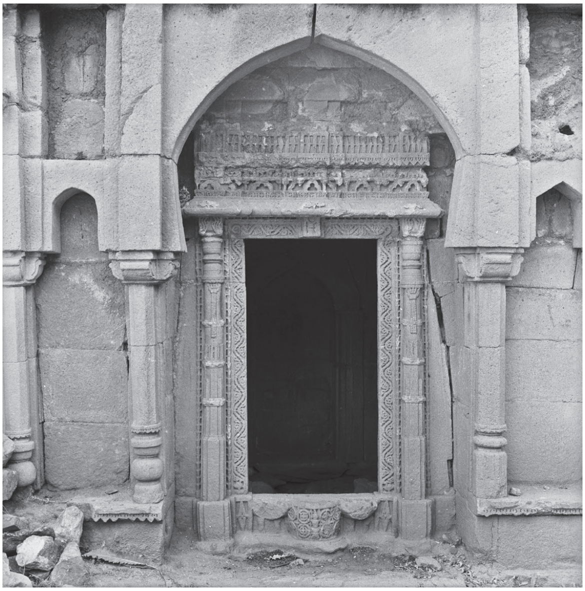

Figure. 2. Masjid-i sangī: entrance on east façade.
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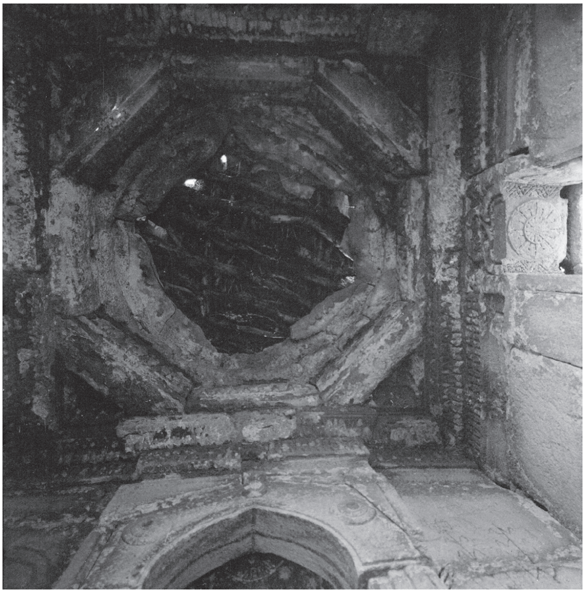

Figure. 3. Masjid-i sangī: interior view of ceiling and mihrab arch.
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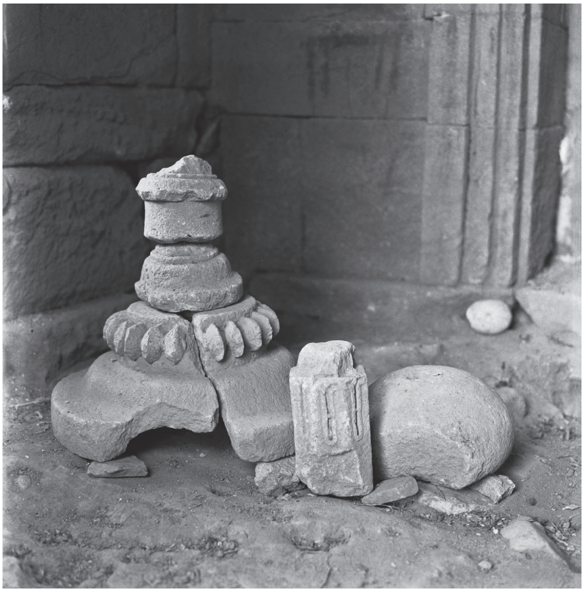

Figure. 4. Masjid-i sangī: fallen exterior decorative fragments (including dome finial), stored inside. © History of Art and Architecture Library Collections, Harvard University

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